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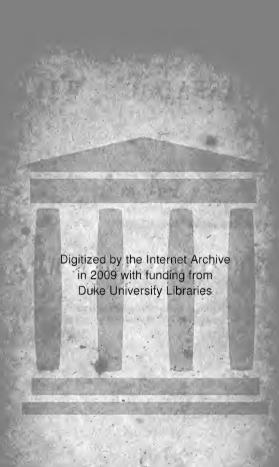
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#### THE

# AMBASSADOR'S WIFE.

#### BY MRS. GORE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE BOYAL FAVOUBITE," "CECIL," "THE DEBUTANTE," ETC. ETC.

"Vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself,
And falls on t'other side."—SHAKESPEARE.

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### THE AMBASSADOR'S WIFE.

#### CHAPTER I.

And motherless she grew from girlhood, e'en To woman's fair maturity; nor dream'd The measure of her loss in lacking thus That Providence of love which Heaven's best care Still leaves most needful.—MARLOWE.

In one of the northern duchies of the German empire, no matter whether rejoicing in the prefix of Saxe or Hesse, stands the seigneurial mansion of the Barons von Rehfeld; an edifice admirably calculated to grace one of the sweeping champaign landscapes of Rubens, or adorn the background of the hunting pieces of Snyders or Wouverman.

Schloss Rehfeld is situated in a highly-cultivated plain, isolated from the surrounding corn-fields only by a fosse and stone-dyke; the platform being sheltered on all sides by sloping woodlands, whose forests of intermingled pines and beech have for ages afforded the pleasures of the chase to the Barons of Rehfeld, during those eight months of the year in which the duties of chamberlainship did not chain them to the precincts of the court, in the diminutive city which, for mystery sake, we shall Germanize under the name of the Residenz.

The mansion house of Schloss Rehfeld, of considerable extent and some two centuries' antiquity, is constructed of small red bricks, coped and ornamented with freestone; which, in a peculiarly dry atmosphere and upheld with the orderliness of a prosperous estate, maintains to this day its freshness, as if existent only on the immortal canvas of the artists already cited. Time has done little to the old mansion, except supply successive Barons von Rehfeld,—Wilhelms,—Albrechts, and Eberhards—to its domination; and, in process of time, their portraits to its family gallery.

Till within these few years, the progress of civilization was little perceptible in its arrangements. All it had been when the troops of Gustavus Adolphus scoured the domain shortly after the erection of the baronial mansion, it remained when those of Napoleon traversed it, at the commencement of the campaign that left so lasting a scar

upon the military fame of most military Brandenburg.

On this last occasion, however, the house of Rehfeld had a direful leaf to inscribe in its annals, connected with the incursion. The young baroness, on the eve of becoming for the first time a mother, was so overwhelmed by the agitation of the event, and the tumults thus strangely interrupting the monotonous tranquillity of those stagnant solitudes, that, two days afterwards, the courier which bore to the Residenz, where the baron was in official attendance on the grand duke, tidings that he was father of a daughter, acquainted him that the body of his beloved Agnes was already in its coffin.

The visitation was two-fold. The baron had set his heart upon an heir; and though the last man on earth to be encumbered with such an appendage, was the widowed father of a girl! It was a deep affliction. He scarcely knew which most to deplore—the death of his wife.

or the survival of his child.

The Baron von Rehfeld was a grave, matter-of-fact man, who, nevertheless, had married for love! Most men, even of the most arid nature, once in their lives or so, betray some weaker or gentler point—the vulnerable heel of the hero—the foot of clay of the brazen idol; and the baron, though proud of his two-and-twenty descents as becomes a man honourably recorded in the annals of Ratisbon, had chosen his wife from the family of an humble minister of the gospel of the Lutheran church.

He had not, however, the greatness of mind indispensable to uphold so independent a choice. The inconsistent man soon made it apparent, both to the world and his wife, that it was only by a capitulation of principle he had renounced his prejudices of caste. From the moment of his marriage, he separated poor Agnes absolutely and entirely from her family; and after the brief and formal presentation at court exacted by the kindness of his sovereign, of whom he was a favourite, consigned her to Schloss Rehfeld, while he pursued his official career at the Residenz.

Though the married life of the baroness comprised little more than a year, it had been chequered by many gloomy moments. The young heart, snatched from amid a cordial family, had drooped in the cheer-lessness of that isolated home. Her affection for the husband so much her superior in condition, was tempered by awe; and during the last three solitary months preceding her confinement, left amid the terrors of war to the protection of her household, she had become by degrees so depressed in soul as well as so feeble in body, that death had an easy conquest of it. Though but nineteen years of age, Agnes resigned herself to die, as heart-weary of the world as if threescore and ten had passed over her head.

It was to the nurse who had watched over his own childhood and who, at fifty years of age, was still active as a girl, that the Baron von Rehfeld assigned the care of his daughter. He was not, perhaps, wholly without hope that, on some future day, a doleful letter from Sara might acquaint him that the frail infant had rejoined its young mother in the grave. But the less ardent his paternal affections, the more surely the nursling throve and prospered; and when, five years afterwards, the blessings of peace enabled the baron, then progressing towards his thirtieth year, to pass the hunting season on his estates, the first object that struck him on entering the fine old hall, was a little fairy thing with long flaxen ringlets hanging almost to its feet, which he would have been tempted to fall down and worship as supernatural, had not old Sara prompted the lovely child to demand a blessing from her father.

In a moment, Ida was in her father's arms; and from that day he seemed to abjure his former regrets concerning the sex of his offspring. The little girl was of such singular beauty, such rare intelligence, that, even as a stranger, it would have been difficult not to be attached by

her caresses. How much more so, when every feature reminded him of Agnes—the only human being he had ever loved—and when the child addressed him with tender appellations and endearments, now becoming unfamiliar to his ear. It required no great effort on the part of the attached Sara to render the child an object of deep affection to the baron.

It was soon discovered in the establishment, and even among the tenants, that no concession was to be obtained from the baron, except through the medium of the little girl. The task of the innocent laws one of daily intercession. She had to screen the guilty, and protect the unfortunate. Though scarcely able to lisp, she was already an

Influence.

When once a hard minded man surrenders himself to a domination of this tender nature, he seems to take pride in making himself a

greater slave than other people.

Rehfeld appeared to glory in subjecting himself to the caprice of his beautiful child; and Ida was soon as completely spoiled as if she had not been the offspring of a man who had been ashamed of his wife, and discontented with the daughter she had bequeathed him. His country neighbours, nay, even the courtly friends and kinsmen who accompanied him occasionally from the Residenz to share the hunting parties and carousing of Schloss Rehfeld, seemed to emulate his infatuation for the uncarthly-looking being who haunted that grim solitude like a spirit

or peace

Till she was fifteen years old, Ida von Rehfeld never once quitted the old mansion. From the pastor of the village she derived all the instruction which Sara was unequal to bestow; and, singularly enough, the education of that fair girl was pretty nearly the same as would have been bestowed on a young baron, had her father's prayer been propitiated by the birth of a son. The venerable huntsman, who had been her father's preceptor, taught her to ride, and even instructed her in the use of the rifle and cross-bow; while Herr Vossius imparted as large a share of classical learning as would probably have required the aid of a smart cane, or considerable expenditure of birch, to infuse into the mind of the heir of the estate. Every summer, her father made his appearance at the Schloss, armed with new music, new books, new tapestries, new trinkets; and was enchanted to perceive that the instructions bestowed by the kapell-meister, who accompanied him, had so far prospered during his absence, as to leave her an excellent musician.

Ida was now a beautiful girl—a girl who almost reconciled him to her not being a boy; active and intelligent as she was lovely; and if a little wilful, not more so than might be expected, considering the absolute authority she was allowed to exercise in the establishment.

The pretty Fraulein had scarcely completed her fifteenth year, when, as she was anxiously avaiting the arrival of her father for the commencement of his autumnal hunting party, a letter from the baron acquainted her that, instead of being accompanied by his usual friends, or projecting his ordinary stay of some weeks at the château, he should bring with him only a single person, and remain there but a single day. For the first time his visit was preceded by no baggage waggon—no batterie de cuisine—no French cook—no plate-chest—none of his usual appurtenances of festivity. A few cases of books and musical instruments—addressed to "Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau"—were the sole harbingers of his approach.

The mystery was soon unravelled. The Baron von Rehfeld had accepted a diplomatic mission at the court of St. Petersburg; and even as he had been content to renounce the society of his only child, in order to fortify her constitution in youth by a purer air than that of the Residenz, he was now unwilling to expose her to the hazards of a rude climate and hasty removal from her native country. His mission in Russia was of a temporary nature. It was unlikely that he should be more than twelve months absent; and he had accordingly determined upon leaving Ida at Schloss Rehfeld, under the guardianship of Herr Vossius, whose presbytery was only a few hundred yards distant from the house.

The baron was not, however, disregardful that the coming year was one of peculiar importance to a girl so singularly educated as his young heiress. The high distinctions to which she might hereafter pretend at the court of the Residenz, rendered it indispensable she should become neither a pedant nor a hoyden; and in order to remedy these deficiencies, which suddenly occurred to him as likely to have arisen under the presidency of Vossius and the old nurse, he had obtained from Paris, through the intervention of the lady of the French envoy at ——, a governess of mature age and eminent accomplishments, to become, during his absence, the companion of Mademoiselle von Rehfeld; a measure which, in the opinion of the worthy Sara, added insult to injury!

That they should not only be left behind, but left under the surveillance of a gouvernante, was an offence the old nurse of the baron found it difficult to pardon. Nevertheless, when her lord eventually made his appearance, his habitual influence over her mind soon subdued her rebellious feelings to subordination; while as to the governess, as to "Mademoiselle Thérèse," she proved to be a person so sprightly courteous, and sociable, that it would have been difficult for even the most contentious old woman in the world to pick a quarrel with her.

A life spent in tuition in one or two of the first families in France, had so accustomed her to the task of conciliating refractory spirits, that she found little difficulty in converting the prejudiced German nurse into a confederate; and the wild, but graceful and intelligent Ida, into a cheerful and promising pupil.

Though Mademoiselle von Rehfeld beheld the departure of her father for so long a journey with the deepest regret, her tears were soon dried by the kindly assiduities of her new companion; and she was willing to admit the wisdom of the baron, in providing her such a substitute for his society.

The lessons which Ida had to receive were purely superficial. The foundations of a solid education had been too carefully laid by the pastor to admit of any attempt at interference on the part of the French governess, to whom her pupil appeared a prodigy of learning. But the fair young German had a thousand trivial accomplishments to acquire, the exposition of which was as pleasant to Mademoiselle Thérèse as to her docile scholar; and so eager was the application of the young recluse, apprised for the first time of her deficiency in the usual branches of female education, that after a few months, the kind-hearted Mademoiselle Thérèse could scarcely persuade herself, that the fruits she saw so rapidly approaching to maturity were of her own engrafting.

Unluckily, however, this indulgent kind-heartedness rendered her a peculiarly unfit instructress for Ida von Rehfeld. However important the influence of her courtesies and graces of manner on the habits of the lovely, but untaught heiress, her unfeigned admiration of Ida's talents was as ingenious an encouragement to the vanity of her pupil, as the adoration of the old nurse and the reverence of the pastor had been fatal stimulants to her pride. By poor old Vossius, she had been treated as a divinity—by Sara as a queen; and the vassals of her father, to whom she was endeared by many an act of grace in their behalf, surrounded her with professions of subservience. Her pride in herself, however, was rather as the representative of her father, rather as a daughter of the house of Rehfeld, which, as the greatest thing she had ever known, possessed an overweening majesty in her estimation—than as the beautiful and talented Ida. It was such as might progress into ambition, but was scarcely likely to degenerate into any meaner weakness.

Sara, a retainer of the family, had from her earliest hour instilled into her mind notions of its consequence and her own; and even Mademoiselle Thérèse, though in her heart she regarded even the court of the Saxon Duchy as purely provincial, and its palace as far inferior to an hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain, had not resided six months at Schloss Rehfeld, before she seemed to coincide in the prejudice of its inmates, that the baron's daughter had only to be presented at court, to attract the eyes of all Europe towards that thence-forward ennobled

nook of the Holy Roman Empire.

The romance of her pupil's position in life, and the peculiarities of her education, were not without their charm in the eyes of one long trammelled by the routine of Parisian life. All was new, strange, and striking to her in that dull old château; and while it became the pastime of her long winter evenings, to recount to the only too attentive Ida, the glories and attractions of her own more brilliant country, she was not sorry to be occasionally relieved from the discription of the gay soirées of the Hotel de Choisy, where she had been spending her last five years, by the solemn episodes with which old Sara performed her part in the gossip of the night; concerning the wars of Germany, the grandeur of its feudal barons, and above all, the heroism and dignity of the ancestors of the fair girl, who, though released from her authority, still sat patient and attentive by her side.

# CHAPTER II.

La chose humaine persiste à trôner! tant petit que soit le royaume, tant mesquine que soit la couronne, on veut toujours trôner.—Champfort.

NEARLY two years had elapsed, and still the cautious delays of diplomatic negotiation detained Baron von Rehfeld at St. Petersburg. Had he anticipated so long an absence, his daughter would probably have been his companion. The risks of foreign travel would have been, in fact, far less perilous than her peculiar position at home. Adulation is always dangerous to the young; but with its flattering unction unbalanced by rougher lessons, the evil is incalculable. Ida von Rehfeld was never looked upon unless by admiring eyes, never addressed save by cajoling tongues. She had no companions of her own age, to check her girlish presumption by bantering or reproof, or call forth the better sympathies of her heart by friendship and affection.

Her life was a life of superiority over her fellow creatures; the surest mode of reducing her temper and disposition beneath their level. She might be pardoned for believing that the little circle surrounding her was created solely for her use and profit; for it professed no other object or purpose. Even in becoming haughty and reckless, the fault

was not altogether her own.

There was a broad gravelly parapet beside the fosse flanking the glacis of the old mansion, along which, on the sunny afternoons of spring, the happy girl was permitted to enjoy unmolested exercise; while Mademoiselle Thérèse indulged in the siesta rendered indispensable by the unseemly dinner-hour of primitive Germany, or amused herself with the French newspapers, kindly forwarded for her amusement from Petersburg by the baron. It was there that Ida communed with herself. While the breezes sweeping from the forest over the plain, freshened her cheeks and quickened her buoyant steps, the soul within her became equally vivified. The result was, that one fine day, when Mademoiselle Therese at length sauntered forth to express her surprise at the untiring activity of her dear child, Ida suddenly burst forth into exclamations almost as startling to the gouvernante as if they had proceeded from one of the stone lions rampant, stationed at intervals along the parapet, to support the coat of arms of the house of Rehfeld.

My father's letter this morning gives a splendid account of the gala held for the emperor's birthday!" said she. "As if I were not sufficiently weary of the life I lead here, without having it rendered more gloomy by contrast with his brilliant pictures of a courtly

existence!"

The governess replied, as it is the province of governesses to reply in such cases, that the time would come when her dear pupil would thank her father for his paternal care in having prolonged the period of her education, and withheld her from all participation in the tumultuous scenes of the world, till she was of an age at once to enjoy

and resist their influence.

"The time may come, but it is not yet come!" cried Ida, impetously. "I am heartsick of this place! I want the sight of new objects-I want the sound of fresh voices! I am nearly seventeen, and for years I have beheld only peasants and domestics. Till you came hither, ma bonne, this sufficed me. My poor, good Sara, and the kind Herr Pastor, satisfied my desires of affection and companionship. But you have given me a taste for better things. All you have told me of France, of the brilliant society of Paris, of the life led universally by the women of your own country, have so excited my interest, that I am getting impatient of this cold, featureless place. Look!" said she, suddenly pausing. "For nearly seventeen years, I have had no object to gaze at but yonder spire, peeping through the trees, and the sweep of woods beyond, cresting the line of hills."

"A charming landscape!" muttered Mademoiselle Thérèse, from whose spontaneous ejaculations of disgust, at her first arrival, the Fraulein probably derived her first consciousness of the tediousness of

the place.
"But what does it say to the heart to attach or elevate?" cried Ida. "Nothing! Had my poor mother lived, or had I possessed a young sister to grow up with me here, the charm of early associations would have endeared every object around us. But my home has been cheerless; and my father ought to reflect upon this when he describes to me,

in such glowing colours, the brilliant festivities of St. Petersburg, in

which he well knows I am now of an age to participate."

Mademoiselle was a little shocked, a little alarmed. This sudden assumption of independence of opinion on the part of her pupil led her to regret having so freely amused Mademoiselle de Rehfeld's insipid leisure with accounts of the gay entertainments she had witnessed in the establishment of the Countess de Choisy, of whose daughter she had been the preceptress. All she could now do, however, in justice to her employer, was to enter into a defence of the policy of Monsieur le Baron; secretly resolving to write and acquaint him of the impatience his lovely Ida was betraying for the moment of restoration to his society, and inauguration into that of the great world.

But that her pupil was a Protestant, Mademoiselle Thérèse would have adopted the more expedient course of appealing to her Director. But she was too well aware of the prolixities of the worthy Vossius, to engage his aid in reproving this efflorescence of youthful vanity, in their common charge. She did not suppose that the tedium of Schloss Rehfeld was likely to be diminished, in Ida's estimation, by a daily

sermon from the pastor.

Meanwhile, the impatience of the dawning beauty did not tend to soften the hauteur of her character. Her manner became absent and unconciliating; and every fresh despatch that brought an account of the diversions in which her father bore a part, served to augment her dissatisfaction.

"The emperor, you see, opened the ball given by the Grand Duchess Helena with the daughter of the French ambassador!" said she. "Had I been with my father, chère bonne, I should have shared the honours

and pleasures of the evening."

"But the crowd, the display, the distraction of such a scene, my poor child!" remonstrated Sara, who happened to be present; "you would

have been terrified to death!"

"Why more terrified than the daughter of Count St. Guillaume?" demanded Ida. "My father seems determined to unfit my timidity and awkwardness for a share in such scenes, by the utter solitude to which I am condemned. Yet so far from feeling alarmed, chère bonne, at the prospect of ever going into a world of fêtes and representation, like that you have described in such flowing colours, I feel, on the contrary, that life would be doubly worth living, in such an atmosphere. I was not created for companionship with streams and forests. I want friends to talk to—acquaintance to talk of. I want all you have described to me, as constituting the charm of the Hôtel de Choisy."

Again did poor Mademoiselle Thérèse wish she had been less communicative. It is true that, during those weary evenings at Rehfeld, she had recurred to her former life more for the diversion of her own ennui, by retrospection, than for the recreation or instruction of Ida; and so absorbed had she allowed herself to become in her descriptions of the gay coteries and elegant publicity of Parisian life, that she had failed to notice the glistening of her pupil's eyes, or the ardent interest excited by her portraits of the chivalrous youths of France, and the

beauties to whose service they were devoted.

"Be satisfied, dearest Ida!" was all she could now falter in palliation of the mischief. "In two more months, you will be seventeen, and your father has assured us that he shall be here for the hunting season. You will then assume your place at the head of his establishment; and whether he return to his diplomatic duties at St. Petersburg, or settle

altogether at the Residenz, you must become his companion and the sharer of his pleasures. If Sara is to be believed, it is the Baron von Rehfeld's intention to unite you, in the course of next year, with your cousin Wilhelm, one of the most amiable young men at the court of \_\_\_\_\_; who, at your father's death, will inherit his title and fiefs."

"Which is precisely the cause of all my anxiety!" interrupted Ida.

"Except for that horrible prospect, I could bear with this place. But the idea of spending my whole future life here! I am well acquainted with my cousin Wilhelm. When I was a child, he used to accompany his father hither, to the hunting parties. A well-meaning uninteresting cousin, as you can well imagine; a person who will be content to sit

down in dull obscurity, to live and die at Rehfeld!"

"But you cannot suppose, my dear child, that a father, so indulgent as yours, will impose any match upon you really distasteful?" remonstrated Mademoiselle Thérèse. "You have unlimited influence over Monsieur le Baron. He absolutely adores you;—(who does not?) and the moment he cedes to you the control of his household, as he has announced his intention of doing on your ensuing birthday, you will become his companion and friend. Your wishes will be his law. Nay, I have my suspicions that you have only to hint it is the dearest wish of your heart to visit Paris, to determine him to undertake the journey."

"Pray heaven your prognostications may be fulfilled," cried Ida, more cheerfully; and from that day, the reveries of the young girl became brightened by notions of her impending consequence as lady paramount of Schloss Rehfeld, and wild visions of the brilliant pleasures of a still more extended sphere. But that her whole soul was selfengrossed, she must have noticed at that period a singular alteration in the style of her father's letters. The baron, who for some time past had tried to amuse her with detailed accounts of the pleasures of society. was gradually becoming as dry and concise, as when his epistles consisted of exhortations to be diligent in her studies, and affectionate to Sara, her second mother, and Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau. Nay, they evinced a sort of half-repressed uneasiness, precursive as it were of misfortune to him or herself. Allusions, which she did not trouble herself to decypher, darkened his style and announced his increasing infirmity of spirits. The only thing to which poor Ida really gave her attention was that the days were rapidly passing away, the expiration of which was to bring him back to his native country. At the commencement of September, the baron was to reach the Residenz; and after a few days' sojourn there for the discharge of his duties to the prince, he was to repair to Schloss Rehfeld, and give the signal of her enfranchisement from girlish subjection.

Already, the steward had received orders to prepare for the reception of a large and brilliant party, which was to accompany the Herr Baron; and difficult were it to decide which was the more rejoiced at the prospect of seeing the old-fashioned suite of state apartments once more blazing with lights, and resounding with hospitality—Mademoiselle Thérèse or her pupil. Liberal means were habitually assigned by the baron, to procure for his daughter all that the progress of her education, or that girlish vanity seemed to require. But now, a succession of cases arrived from the Residenz, bringing new furniture, new books, new musical instruments, evidently intended for her use; besides a charming variety of dresses and trinkets, inscribed with her name.

Ida was now the happiest of the happy! Her dreams were at length on the eve of realization. Her life seemed only now beginning, A

thousand times a day did she embrace old Sara, or call upon Mademoiselle Thérèse to sympathize in her joy; nor was the gouvernante ever weary of admiring the loveliness of her charge, arrayed for the first time, in the gay attire of modern fashion. Mademoiselle von Rehfeld was beginning to rehearse the graces of the courteous hostess; and her instructress, to assure her that she would do the honours of the castle. in a style certain at once to gratify her father and enchant his noble

As the lovely Ida paraded the picture gallery and saloon, which, thanks to her father's recent liberality had begun to assume something of the tone described by Mademoiselle as characteristic of a "salon comme il faut," she foresaw the moment when it would be filled with an admiring circle, every eye of which was centred upon the youthful

heiress, the cynosure of the festive scene.

On the day fixed for the baron's arrival, a glowing September sun burnished the towers of the old mansion; and even the well-trimmed evergreens of the terrace seemed trying to look bright and lively in honour of the event. In the courtyard was an old-fashioned fountain, recently placed in repair, in order that its puny jet might accredit so great an event in the annals of the baronial family, as the return of a Rehfeld from a diplomatic mission on the icy shores of the Neva; and scattered about the place, were a score or two of villagers in their best array, their button-holes adorned with knots of ribbons or posies of China-asters; who, marshalled under the auspices of poor Vossius, were to sally forth to the extremity of the avenue, to greet their honourable patron with a concatenation of discordant sounds, forming the Sunday orchestra of the singing-loft at Rehfeld.

The morning progressed; and Ida, restless and excited, kept wandering from window to window, on the look-out for a train of carriages; now, changing the arrangement of the vast bouquets with which the providence of the steward had disfigured the jasper vases in the old library, and the recently-received ornaments of Dresden china in the saloon; when at length, her ear was startled by the smacking of a courier's whip, and the jingling of his bells. The cavalcade must be at

hand!

He came, however, only to announce that the Herr Baron and his noble company would still be two hours on the road; and to deliver to

the hands of the Fraulein, a despatch from her father.

Already, Mademoiselle Thérèse had eagerly rushed forth and circulated through the establishment tidings that they had two hours' respite from their duties; when lo! on her return to the saloon, she found the lovely girl she had left so blooming and joyous, speechless and almost ghastly with consternation! Terrible news had evidently been conveyed by her father's letter. The gouvernante almost trembled to hazard an interrogation.

While she was still sitting beside her charge, holding her hand in hers, and suggesting eau de fleur d'orange, and other restoratives, which she might as well have administered unasked, the door was flung open, and old Sara, tottering into the room with a visage still more

overcome than that of her young lady, made her appearance.
"My child-my poor child!"—was all she could utter, as she knelt down before Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, weeping upon the fair hands she pressed to her withered lips.

"What on earth is the meaning of all this?" murmured the astonished

gouvernante. "Speak, Sara-speak!"

"It means," answered the sobbing woman, rising from her knees, "that we have been shamefully deceived. Rehfeld has got a new lady —the baron a new wife. Do you hear the huzzaing in the courtyard? The courier has just circulated the news, and those ungrateful people are hailing it as a matter of joy!"
"Married?"—reiterated Mademoiselle Thérèse, turning as pale as her

natural copper colour would allow.

"Married! All these toys and gimcracks," continued Sara, pointing round at the new furniture, "were intended only to welcome the new baroness. Shameful-shameful!"

"It is certainly somewhat singular that the Baron von Rehfeld should so little have understood what was due to us," replied Mademoiselle Thérèse, drawing up, "as to defer till the eleventh hour, the signification of an event that must have been long in contemplation."

"Long in contemplation, perhaps," murmured Ida, striving to rally

her spirits, "but hurried, he assures me, by unexpected circumstances at the moment of his departure. It had been settled that the marriage should not take place till my father's return to Russia; and he intended to break it to me in person, with a thousand necessary explanations, during his sojourn at Rehfeld. But at the instant of quitting St. Petersburg, the family of-the baroness-pressed the fulfilment of his engagements. The wedding was a hasty one, and it was of course necessary that he should be the first to disclose the fact to the grand duke."

The commentary of Mademoiselle Thérèse upon all this, was an expressive shrug of the shoulders; but the less polished old Sara, who still looked upon the Herr Baron, at nearly fifty years of age, as her nursling, imposed very little restraint upon her exclamations of indig-

nation and disgust.

"A second marriage !-- a marriage after a widowhood of seventeen years !-- a marriage with a foreigner !-- perhaps with a heretic !-- There was no excuse or apology for the Herr Baron."

Even his own faithful nurse disinherited him, from that moment, of

her affections.

#### CHAPTER III.

My father's wife, yet not my mother !- No; Worlds, worlds less than a mother! Filial Duty That hath the part to play of filial Love, Assumes a task outweighing that of Atlas. When doom'd to bear our pondrous globe a-poize. Yet must I honour her, -ay, must !- FLETCHER.

In certain emergencies, and failing a better monitor, pride is some-times a lucky ascendant over the human mind. Grieved as she was, Ida would not allow even those so true to her, to perceive that she thought herself aggrieved. Still less would she permit the stranger about to wrest her sceptre from her hand, to discover that her abdication was compulsory.

Before the arrival of the bridal party, accordingly, she had recovered her courage so far as to receive them with dignity and grace, nay, with a suitable welcome; and it is more than probable that, but for the event which had excited her feelings to so wild a pitch, her deportment as lady of the ascendant at Schloss Rehfeld would have been far less

gracious, than as the humbled step-daughter of a stranger.

She now placed a sort of perversity in appearing to the greatest advantage; resolved that the noble guests of her father should admit her to be fully qualified for presiding over the establishment, which he had chosen to place under the control of an alien; and her youthful beauty became almost painfully dazzling under the excitement of the feelings that swelled her heart to bursting, while her face was radiant with smiles.

Of the age or country of the new baroness, her father had said nothing; and the young girl, naturally connecting the idea of a bride with youth and beauty, expected to find a young and lovely creature hanging on the arm of him whose grave countenance and grey hairs she had been accustomed to venerate, and in whom her trust was already

aiminished

At length, there resounded at a distance the discharge of petards prepared by the tenants, as usual on such occasions, to frighten the horses of the travellers upon their arrival on the confines of the estate. Then came the sound of bells jangling from the village tower of Rehfeld, and finally, the clatter of horses, and rumble of wheels; whereupon, pressing her hands almost convulsively on her heart, as if to subdue its pulsations, Ida rose from the seat into which she had sunk on the first of these intimations of the approach of the travellers; and motioning to Mademoiselle Thérèse not to accompany her too closely, proceeded into the great hall.

The bride and bridegroom had already alighted from their travelling carriage, and were just entering the house. The bride and bridegroom! What a sound to reach the ears of poor Ida! Her eyes, however, were at that moment too eagerly occupied, to allow much leisure for her other faculties; although the tears which she could not altogether succeed in chiding back to their fountain-head, formed some obstacle

to her task of observation.

Nature prompted her to rush forward, and fling herself as usual into the arms of her father. But Ida was beginning to mistrust the sugestions of nature; and consulting only her pride, stopped short in the middle of the hall, and waited till the baron, placing a hand in her own, exclaimed in a broken voice—"My dearest child! embrace your

new mother."

Mademoiselle von Rehfeld's ideas of an embrace being purely German, she was about to extend her arms towards the lady, whose form and features she was now weeping too much in earnest to discern. But her movements were checked by a formal salutation imprinted on either of her cheeks by the baroness; and her ears startled by a voice addressing her in French as purely Parisian as that of Mademoiselle Thérèse!

"Conduct us into the saloon, my dear Ida," said her father, perceiving that more eyes were upon them than he was desirous should pry into their family secrets;—and the moment they had crossed the threshold of the drawing-room, the baron, turning towards a group by which they were elosely followed, began renewing his expressions of welcome to the foreign visitors, who appeared to have misunderstood

the object of his movement.

"Where is my daughter—I am all eagerness to introduce my daughter to her new sister?" cried the baroness:—at which startling exclamation, Ida for the first time bent her gaze steadily upon the bride, and saw with amazement that the lady, whom the dimness of the old hall, and a certain air of elegance and distinction, had invested with the

charms of youth, was really old enough to be her mother.

This discovery became confirmed when the daughter so earnestly summoned made her tardy appearance; and if poor Ida had for a moment flattered herself that the mother-in-law unexpectedly forced upon her endurance, would form no rival to her pretensions to the name of the "Lily of Rehfeld," by which she was known in the environs, the striking beauty of her father's step-daughter was of a nature to invade her rights even to that treasured supremacy.

"Marguerite! I commend you to the protection and kindness of Mademoiselle von Rehfeld," said the baroness, addressing a young lady whom Ida justly estimated to be nearly of her own age; and the silent formality with which "Marguerite" curtseyed in obedience to the exhortation, afforded a somewhat alarming sample of the respect and

obedience exacted by the new baroness.

No further explanations were given. The baroness, fatigued by her journey and the noisy demonstrations of the tenantry in her honour, threw herself into a corner of the sofa, completely exhausted, but completely at home; and such of the party as were not engaged with the baron at the further end of the room, surveying the prospect from its embayed windows, or admiring the courtesy of his greeting to Mademoiselle Thérèse, now hastened towards Madame von Rehfeld, with inquiries and condolences touching the contrarieties of the day.

Involuntarily, Ida took her place in the nearest chair, her hands deathly cold, her ears burning, her respiration impeded. It was the first time she had found herself a secondary personage in that room. Into what depths of insignificance might she not be about to fall!

She took no note of the movements of the baroness's daughter, who, after pausing a moment, as if waiting for a formal invitation to be seated, assumed a chair by her side. No one took the slightest notice of either of them. One half the party was engaged in conversation with the baroness, while the baron attempted to engage himself in conversation with the other.

After the first hurried moments of conversation, Ida summoned courage to examine the individuals composing the two groups, who had been slightly named to her by her father on entering the room, but

whom she found herself unable to individualize.

Now that the feelings of despair, by which she was overcome, had dried the tears in her eyes, she perceived that one of the two strangers stationed beside Madame von Rehfeld, was young and good looking; while the other, a man of maturer years, if less handsome, was remarkable for the distinction of his manners and appearance. They were conversing together in French, which appeared to be the native language of the baroness; and Ida could not but admit that these stranger guests, however unwelcome to her at that moment, displayed higher graces of manner and deportment than her experience of the former autumnal festivities of Schloss Rehfeld had brought under her notice.

Towards the group surrounding her father, the sounds of whose loud and joyous conversation in German reached her where she sat, Ida scarcely ventured to extend her scrutiny. Filial instinct rendered it painful to her at that moment to fix her eyes upon her father, from whom, for the first time in her life, her heart and soul were estranged. A familiar voice, however, suddenly attracted her notice; and looking towards the recessed window, she observed poor Mademoiselle Therèse

expending her civilities on her young cousin Wilhelm von Rehfeld, whose vague and ceremonious replies afforded evidence that his attention was reluctantly given. What could be more natural than that Ida should suppose her cousin anxious to escape from the hands of her

gouvernante, only to pay his compliments to herself?

It was more than a year since they had met; and for many preceding the young heir of the fiefs of the house of Rehfeld, when visiting the eastle annually with his uncle, was accustomed to devote to his lovely cousin the attentions due to cousinship so fair, and calculated to mark his cognizance of the projects entertained by the baron in his favour; and Ida, who, from the moment a surmise of these had entered her head, had become less girlishly cordial in her reception of the future bridegroom, felt that she should now derive solace and importance from his devotion. She was almost angry with Mademoiselle Thérèse for detaining the only member of the party to whom she was an object of solicitude, more particularly as the young baron's wandering and unquiet glances seemed to indicate no little anxiety to be released.

At the close of ten minutes, however, Mademoiselle Thérèse's inquiries of her new acquaintance touching the state of the roads, the news of the Residenz, the health of the grand duke, and the success of the last opera, being exhausted, the baron was at liberty to move; and move he instantly did, proceeding straight towards the end of the room, where his lovely cousin was performing her penance of insignifi-

cance.

The moment Ida became conscious that her cousin was on his road towards her chair, with the instinctive coquetry of her sex, she averted her eyes. At length, finding that no Wilhelm addressed her, she hazarded an inquiring glance around her; and found him,—after the due performance of his three bows of ceremony, and causing the heel of his boots to resound like castanets, according to the rules of Saxon politeness,—commencing a formal conversation with the daughter of the baroness.

The emotions that assailed her at the discovery were probably much such as agitated the feelings of James II., when, on hearing that even the stupid Prince George of Denmark had deserted him for the reforming party, he exclaimed, "So—poor 'est-il-possible,' is gone with the rest!" Still, she was mortified by the secession of even the last and least of those on whom she had for some weeks past been reckoning, as

the devoted slaves of her footstool.

But if the girlish mortification of Ida on this head arose from any suspicion of confederacy between "Marguerite" and the young baron, she must have been quickly re-assured by the cold propriety with which the stranger replied to the courtesies of her new acquaintance. Impossible to be more formal in her deportment, or more laconic in her replies, a greater contrast could scarcely be conceived than between the frank loquacity of the baroness and the mournful taciturnity of her deported.

The day was luckily declining, and the dinner-hour sufficiently near at hand to warrant the retirement of all parties to their rooms, for the duties of the toilet. It was a considerable relief to Ida when her father and the old steward undertook the duty of marshalling the lady of Schloss Rehfeld to the state chamber, which had been prepared for the most illustrious of the expected guests, very little surmising that it was about to be appropriated to the reception of a new Baroness von Rehfeld.

Hurrying to her own room, without further interest in the hospitalities of the house, Ida threw herself on the bed, and burst into an agony of tears. Her humiliation was complete. Her better and worse feelings were alike wounded; her filial love, her selfish pride, her vain ambition, her girlish coquetry; and in proportion as the future she had projected disappeared from view, the past, which she had hitherto regarded so scornfully, assumed due value in her eyes.

Degraded as she was by the recent event, what would she not have given to have returned to her condition of former times; to have become only as the Ida von Rehfeld of the preceding day? What would she not have given, even to be clasped to the heart of the father whose coming she had hailed but as the signal of her rescue from a life of obscurity, or to have been comforted by the assiduities of the kins-

man whom she had accustomed herself to despise as a boor!

But it was too late! Her destinies were not to choose. Little as she had been consulted in their ordering, the decree was irrevocable. Henceforward she was to be the neglected or oppressed step-daughter

of an insolent foreigner!

Young as she was, she had been struck by the worldly ceremoniousness of deportment between her father and his bride. There was evidently nothing tender, nothing intimate between them; and though her first apprehension, on learning his hasty marriage, had been to see a young and charming woman in his arms, to the utter absorption of his affections, she now felt that she should have been more at ease had indications of personal attachment afforded an excuse for his marriage.

On raising her head from her pillow, after some minutes' indulgence in these bitter reflections, she was comforted by the sight of the gouvernante watching over her with a tearful countenance. It was the

first time Ida had ever seen the good hearted woman weep.

"Spare me, I entreat," faltered she, as Mademoiselle Thérèse folding her in her arms, again melted into tears. "I would not, for worlds, that these people discovered the extent of my grief and mortification! If you love me, refrain from aught that may disarm my courage."

And starting up, Ida began, with trembling hands and wild and

flurried manner, to commence her toilet.

At that moment, old Sara, who had been engaged with the chief domestics of the household in doing the honours of the castle to the baroness and her suite, bustled into the room with angry eyes, and a voice hoarse with emotion.

"I call it an outrage!" cried the indignant nurse,—"a downright outrage! To bring down such multitudes of people upon us-and at

such a moment!"

"Rather thank heaven my father did not come alone with his new family," faltered Ida, her anger subdued by the rage of another. "The presence of these strangers imposes, at least, some restraint on our feelings."

"A foreigner, too—a widow—a woman encumbered with children of her own!"

"Dear, good nurse!" remonstrated Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, "remember that, only two hours ago, your chief anxiety arose from the probability of a young wife and future offspring!"

"Anything rather than this haughty cold-blooded woman!" cried the irate Sara. "When the baron, my dear son, presented me to her notice and explained my position in his family, the stranger noticed me only by a bow such as a queen might have given from a throne. But she will soon find her French manner make no way for her, in our

simple cordial Germany!"

"Her French manner?" reiterated Mademoiselle Thérèse; who, to dispense with the presence of Ida's attendant, had undertaken her duties of the day. "Trust me, there is nothing French in such hauteur as you describe! A grande dame de Paris is the most affable creature in the world."

A further proof then, that, though a Parisian, she has never been a

great lady before," retorted the angry nurse.

"But she is not a Parisian, my good Sara!" remonstrated Made-moiselle Thérèse, who was now busied in selecting, from among the dresses lately forwarded by the baron to his daughter, the most costly she could find, that her pupil might do the greatest honour to herself and the occasion. "The baron's letter this morning (you were present when this dear child read it aloud to me), expressly spoke of his marriage with the Countess Erloff. The family of Erloff, my good Sara, is Russian, decidedly Russian!"

"But the baroness, if you remember, was a widow," said Ida gently. "True, my dear child, true !-And you say then," continued she, turning towards the nurse who was still chafing at her contradiction,

that she is by birth a countrywoman of mine?"

"Proud as Lucifer, as she is," retorted the nurse, "perhaps she might not thank either of us for such an expression. If you mean, however, that the Baroness von Rehfeld is French by birth—French she certainly is! I heard as much from her own valet-de-chambre, who has already announced, in presence of Johann-old Johann, a faithful servitor of this dear child's grandsire, that in future he is to be seneschal at Rehfeld."

"My father may purpose the retirement of Johann," interposed Ida, forgetting for a moment her own grievances; "on account of his age and infirmities, but only to secure him a happy retirement from his

duties. Trust to the justice of my father."

"It matters not!" cried the nurse, fractiously; "neither Johann, nor any other of the household, I presume, would under any circumstances be mean-spirited enough to remain here, under the domination of a foreigner!"

"Still, my good Sara," remonstrated Thérèse, whose views of the case were wholly altered by the recent announcement, "still, since this lady is not, as we had all surmised a Russian-a savage Muscovite-since she is by birth, and probably education, courteous and enlightened——"

"I know nothing, good sooth, about courteous or enlightened!" cried the old woman. "Those who are not German born, are alike aliens to me. Saving for love-service, I have no need of service at all; and love-service, even were she my countrywoman, towards one who comes to dislodge my poor child here from her rightful station in her rightful home, is out of the question. The best farewell I can take of Schloss Rehfeld is the speediest!"

"But your poor child?" faltered Ida, turning round from the hands that were anxiously adorning her; "surely you would not abandon me, only because others more bound to be friend me, have done me

wrong?"

"Abandon thee?-no!" exclaimed the poor woman, brought to her senses by this rebuke, "rather follow thee to the world's end, whithersoever thou goest."

And but for the remonstrances of the gouvernante, that the dinner bell was about to sound, and that for their darling charge to appear at table, either carelessly attired or with her face distorted by weeping, was anything but expedient, the embraces of the subdued old creature and her nursling's nursling, would have been prolonged beyond all

reason.

"And now I think of it," said Sara, recalled by her own tears to a milder mood, "the baron bad me tell thee, dearest child, that, howbeit his duties of ceremony to his guests (he said no word, good man, of his old bride!) were too imperative to permit his seeing thee alone, it might be until to-morrow, he intreated thee to believe, that his heart was not the less with thee; and to comfort thyself as one abiding under the roof of a father to whom she is the dearest thing on earth."

"I am satisfied!" said Ida, wiping away her tears, and resuming her courage; "I am perfectly satisfied. I was, indeed, afraid he had forgotten me."

Thou shouldst have made allowance for the hurry and agitation of such a moment," said Sara, taking the part of her son and master, the moment he appeared to be accused.

"The more pity," hinted Mademoiselle Thérèse, glad of an oppor-tunity to retort upon her previous ungraciousness, "that he could not precede his gay associates by a day or two, so as to preserve this painful family meeting from publicity."

"It seems to me," murmured Ida, shrugging her shoulders, "that it had been far worse to bear in the privacy of our domestic fireside. My father's wife will now want leisure to examine my feelings or criticise my conduct. No! since this misfortune was decreed, I am glad the shock has been sudden, and the inauguration of the new people an affair of state. They seem to arrive here at Rehfeld, only like guests. Better so! Accident has been kinder to me than my father."

The toilet of Mademoiselle Rehfeld being now completed, and the time expired admitting of her absence from the party, the exclamations of her two adoring companions afforded to her youthful vanity, the incense to which it was only too well accustomed; and so vehemently did they assure her she was all loveliness-all perfection, that the magnificent dress, and costly ornaments, recently bestowed by her father, seemed to have redoubled the usual measure of her charms.

Reliant on this soothing adulation, for no countercheck of disapproval had ever reached her ear, the bosom of the young beauty heaved with emotions of gratified pride, and the mantling blood fixed a permanent blush upon her cheek. It was no flattery, at least on the part of her two injudicious friends, to assert that never had she looked more

lovely.

Of all the vanities that beset the female heart, that of conscious beauty is the most excitable and influential; and Ida, as she descended the grand staircase, and was about to re-enter the circle of strangers she had quitted in disgust, felt almost happy in the re-assurance of her personal pre-eminence over the rivals in authority bestowed upon her

That the younger and more dangerous—that Marguerite—that Mademoiselle Erloff (for so she had been recently named by Sara), formed any pretension to eclipse the young heiress of Schloss Rehfeld, was disproved in the eyes of Ida, on entering the saloon, by the timidity with which she sat concealed behind her mother's fauteuil, and the simplicity of a costume consisting in her own dark braided hair, and a dress of white muslin of the plainest form. In the course of the evening, however, her opinions on this point were fated to undergo some

modification.

The dinner, though served with splendour, dragged dull and heavily through its Silesian multitude of courses. Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, seated beside her cousin at a distance from either her father or the baroness, was lost in abstraction, and all around her seemed passing in the phantasmagorical showing of a dream; till the moment when, coffee having been served at table, according to the coustom of most continental countries, the whole party rose to quit the dinner-room together.

With absent listlessness, Ida took the arm of the young baron to follow the new lady of the castle, who was leaning on that of Prince Gallitzin, the elder of the two guests who had been presented to her before dinner; and Mademoiselle Erloff, whose cavalier was Count Alfred de Vaudreuil, the youngest and noisiest of the party; when, as they were traversing the picture gallery in procession, on their return to the now illuminated saloon, the baroness paused till Ida came up

with her, evidently as a matter of courtesy.

Dismissing the two gentlemen with a nod as omnipotent as that of Juno, she took the arm of her step-daughter, while the prince sauntered towards the billiard-room adjoining the gallery, and Ida stood transfixed

by her coolness.

"These are highly interesting family portraits!" said she, raising her glass towards one which, instead of representing, like the majority of the pictures, the grim and gaunt ancestors of the house of Rehfeld, exhibited a Franciscan monk in the agonies of penitence, a frightful copy of one of the painful originals of Spagnoletto. "I must examine them more at leisure. Native artists, I presume? Again, new acquaintances to make! for I confess, that, with the exception of Holbein, Durer, and Cranach (whose works I do not recognize here), I am miserably unfamiliar with the masters of the German school. On many such points, I have my education to make; but I shall prove a docile, if not an apt scholar."

"Family portraits," observed Ida, coldly, "especially when not of first-rate merit, are rarely interesting, unless to those of kindred

blood,"

"Or to those in whom intermarriage may have awoke kindred feelings," replied the baroness, not choosing to perceive that offence was intended. "By the way, my dear child, I am meditating my first quarrel with your father, and on your account."

Startled by the deliberate sang-froid of the woman of the world, Ida had not courage for the interrogation she saw was expected

of her.

"The baron would not allow me," she pursued, "to bring with me for your use, a few of the chiffons which the remoteness of this place from any capital might, I thought, render acceptable. He assured me that he was in the habit of sending you everything that money could procure, for your pleasure or adornment. How could I suppose the dear baron had profited so little by his recent experience at our gay court of St. Petersburg; which, next to Paris, or perhaps because supplied from Paris, prides itself upon being the best dressed in Europe, as to have disfigured you with things five years out of date, and even when new adapted only for an old woman like myself! But men, even the cleverest, are little to be trusted in such matters. They have no taste for the fitness of things. They conceive that half the merit of dress

consists in its cost; whereas the greatest distinction of toilet, in a young person, is to have the air of costing nothing."

Ida, to whom this sally had very much that of an economical exhortation, replied coldly and briefly, that there was every excuse for the

baron's prodigality in favour of an only daughter.

"For his prodigality, certainly—if it existed, of which I see no evidence; but not, my dear child, for his bad taste. Were you to appear in your present style of dress in one of our gay ball-rooms, either French or Russian, you would pass for a chaperon. No one could possibly imagine that an unmarried girl so far underrated her potent charms of youth and beauty, as thus to overload herself with ornaments!"

Ida felt that she was blushing-if not with shame-with anger, at

this covert reproof.

"But it is all the fault of the baron!" resumed the imperturbed stepmother; and her embarrassed companion was almost persuaded that an affectionate pressure of the arm enforced the assurance. "No manbut why belabour with a heavy sermon so light a subject? Tell me, my dear child, what is the order of the evening? How do you amuse your visitors at Rehfeld? What have we to offer these people to-night?"

They were now emerging into the brilliantly-lighted saloon, and by way of answer, Ida glanced towards the magnificent piano with which

her father had lately presented her.

"Out of tune, I conclude," said the baroness, replying to her look,

"like every piano in every country house!"
"On the contrary," Ida was beginning, "only yesterday—

"Ah, so much the better," cried the baroness, interpreting her "What new music have you? Not a word of Strauss, meaning. Lanner, or Labitsky, I entreat, for we have had nothing else at St. Petersburg the whole winter; and to say the truth, our gentlemen, I suspect, are no very ardent musicians, unless in a box at the Italian opera-no matter where. You will notice, some day or other, my dear Ida, that the corps diplomatique of every country in Europe is religiously devoted to les Bouffes, at once as a matter of good taste and bon ton. But I was inquiring what we had before us for to-night? Whist, of course !- the prince must have his whist-sans le vhist, pas de salut! But for you children, could you not manage some petits jeux? If not, Marguerite can put you in the way. We may, perhaps, arrange charades or tableaux for another night; meantime, do let us have something."

The restlessness of the grand dame to whom it was impossible to pass an evening without some sort of effort to entertain her, appeared to poor Ida little short of disease; still she felt, as before, that all this stir and bustle was preferable to the stillness of domestic life. She trusted that the ceremony of her dethronement would thus pass unobserved by

their guests from the Residenz.

Moreover, she soon perceived that Madame von Rehfeld, though ostensibly consulting her about these and similar matters, and continually summoning her step-daughter to her side, and detaining her by gestures the most endearing, disposed everything exclusively in her own way. She was one of those women who, without any decided superiority of beauty or wit, know so well to turn to account the share they possess, and so self-assertingly take possession of everything and everybody falling in their way, that it seems impossible, even to stronger minds, to dispute their ascendancy.

She contrived accordingly that the baron should require from his

daughter, as an exhibition of her musical powers, a symphony of half an hour's duration, such as demanded the utmost force of amateurship to support without a yawn; after which, Marguerite was ordered to the pianoforte, in order that a few simple notes of one of Schubert's exquisite ballads should render the laborious effort of the preceding exhibition still more apparent. No sooner was the pure sweet voice of Mademoiselle Erloff audible, than the murmur of conversation became hushed. The men, scattered through different parts of the saloon, drew nearer to the instrument. Even Mademoiselle Thérèse, who had been conversing with the young kinsman of her patron, at some distance from the rest of the party, was unconsciously attracted towards the gentle musician.

The only person not manifestly enchanted with the performance of Mademoiselle Erloff, was herself. At the close of her song, Marguerite rose from the piano with tremulous limbs and a flushed cheek, overcome by emotion and timidity; afraid of her mother's condemnation, yet still more afraid of the general applause that greeted her performance; and Ida, jealous, almost envious of her success, felt ashamed in her turn, on recognizing the innate and most genuine diffidence of the girl whom she had been prepared to find exult in her superiority of accomplishment.

"Marguerite has neither your knowledge of music nor your powers of execution, my dear child," said the baroness, soothingly, to her stepdaughter, on noticing Mademoiselle von Rehfeld's crest-fallen countenance. "She is so fond of painting, that to music she has given less time than I could desire. You must encourage her, my dear Ida, and, in time, perhaps, she may do something. I have always fancied that the very air of Germany must confer musical taste and feeling. Marguerite will perhaps acquire here the zeal that was wanting at Petersburg."

On turning round at the close of a compliment which Ida secretly regarded as the praise undeserved which is "scandal in disguise," she found her young rival established in friendly conversation with Mademoiselle Thérèse. There was now a theme of common interest between The accomplishments of the young girl and the appreciation of the governess, brought about a speedy intimacy; and Ida was startled to perceive that the stiff, formal, and apparently disdainful damsel who had been seated beside her, required only encouragement and sympathy to brighten her countenance with expression, and soften her manners into courtesy and grace.

Mademoiselle von Rehfeld was now thoroughly dispirited. A glance round that gay saloon, filled with strangers to whom she was comparatively an object of indifference, who were conversing in a foreign tongue

with which its antique walls were unfamiliar, and who, in their courtliness of habits and manners, probably regarded its simplicity as barbarous and herself as an awkward little German mädchen, only a few degrees more polished and refined than her father's tenants, reduced her to insignificance. She became conscious that her dreams of girlhood had been too aspiring. All the self-sufficiency engendered by her life of solitary predominance, was crumbling away. Her father had deserted her. Even her good governess seemed on the eve of deserting to the enemy's camp; and that night, when the haughty heiress of Rehfeld retired to the chamber hitherto brightened by indistinct visions of future glory, she was reduced to a state of misery and mortification, which it required more than all the wisdom inculcated by the lessons of Herr Vossius to meet without an agony of tears!

#### CHAPTER IV.

Il faut qu'une longue souffrance éclaire notre esprit, Pour deviner l'orage sur un ciel qui sourit.—Bertin.

THAT night was one of watchfulness and meditation to Ida—the first in her life she had ever found sleepless. Young as she was, she saw that much of her future happiness depended upon the mode in which

she encountered the present crisis of her destinies.

On such advisers as her prejudiced old nurse and inconsistent governess, she had little reliance; while the poor pastor was too completely devoted to his patron to hazard a word of available counsel. Already Mademoiselle von Rehfeld mistrusted nearly as much as she disliked her; and all she had ever read in story or heard in legend of the cruel persecutions of step-mothers, recurred to her recollection. She entertained little doubt that the intruder would leave no means untried to estrange her father's affections, and gradually reduce her to subservience and despair. Happily, she was on her guard. She would fortify herself against the enemy within such ramparts of reserve, and conceal her troubles and fears under such an armour of coldness, that the intriguante, her terrible domestic foe, would be kept at bay.

She resolved, in short, as most people do who determine upon playing a part contrary to the suggestion of their natures, to render herself as disagreeable as possible. But though veteran diplomatists may sit in their cabinets and devise plans of policy, it is not so easy for a girl of seventeen to adopt an independent line of conduct. A girl of seventeen is not only the slave of others, but of herself; of her own gay impulses of nature, her own joyousness of heart. At the close of a few days, Idayon Rehfeld, forced, for the first time in her life, to submit to the influence of an authority, tacitly exercised, indeed, but not the less potent, found herself carried away by the force of circumstances, and forced to do as

she was done by.

The well-drilled household which accompanied the bridal party to Rehfeld, had taken possession of the place, as of a conquered country calling into existence a new order of things, of which it was impossible to deny the superiority over the antecedents of the family. The dull, old-fashioned place was growing almost cheerful; and the habits of penuriousness and unseemliness, consequent upon the absenteeism of the baron, and the inexperience of his daughter disappeared, in a few days, under the authority of the French mattre-dhôtel of the new lady, till

Ida scarcely recognized her former desolate home.

Fain would she have joined with Sara and Johann in condemning these foreign innovations, and the change of hours and habits imposed on the baron;—condemnation was impossible. A "Paradise was opened in the wild." In lieu of the formality of their former mode of life, and the coarse abundance of their cheer, the table at Rehfeld was now admirably served, while the saloon displayed the polished elegance of metropolitan life. Nay, as if in condescension to her girlish whimsies, for the first time, Ida found herself included in the hunting expeditions which had so often excited her interest and curiosity. The ladies of the party repaired daily to the rendezvous de chasse in an open carriage; and on discovering her step-daughter to be so bold and excellent a horsewoman, the

baroness proposed on more than one occasion, that she should accompany her father to the forest, and witness the event of the chase.

"Marguerite, poor little frightened thing, has neither health nor strength for such exploits!" said she; "but you, my dear child, whom a country education has rendered robust, cannot do better than enjoy

so harmless and invigorating a means of recreation."

Of the generosity of this concession, Ida was fully sensible. It was impossible to ride more fearlessly or more gracefully. Her beautiful form was never seen to greater advantage, than when mounted on her favourite mare Katalba, by the side of her father; and the admiration she excited and the greater degree of intimacy promoted by the accidents of the chase with the gentlemen of the party, soon frustrated her projects of reserve, sullenness, or even coldness. With spirits cheered by exercise and excitement, she returned with blooming cheeks to take her part in the pleasures of the evening.

A succession of visitors, connections of the baron or members of the corps diplomatique at the Residenz, now made their appearance at Schloss Rehfeld. Night after night, music, dancing, charades, tableaux, theatricals, enlivened the place so long abandoned to solitude and neglect. A new world was opened to the young recluse. All that had bewildered her imagination in the recitals of Mademoiselle Thérèse, seemed transported, as by the wand of an enchantress, into the depths of her se-

clusion.

To her great surprise, moreover, the baroness, from whom she had expected a gradual change from courtesy to coldness, and from coldness to cruelty, became kinder and kinder as her own reserve wore off. Ida, with ideas formed exclusively from books, having prepared herself to find the breathing world composed of extremely good or extremely bad people, without suspecting that the mediocre preponderate, had imputed profound dissimulation to a worldly woman, incapable of either virtue or vice, and acting merely up to the habits of the class of life in which she had worn away her frivolous existence; and who was too well disposed in favour of the enjoyments of life, not to promote the pleasures of all around her.

The new baroness was, as asserted by old Sara, of French extraction, though born of emigrant parents, long settled in Russia. By birth a Vaudreuil, she had been united early in life with the father of Marguerite, and figured as the lovely and popular Countess Erloff, at the brilliant court of the Emperor Alexander. Her beauty and accomplishments, indeed, were supposed to have had some influence in promoting the high appointments obtained by her husband. There was no stain, however, on her reputation; nor could any one point out the slightest breach of propriety. But the old count being a man as insignificant in mind as person, there was no other mode of accounting for the distinctions he enjoyed than the secret influence of his wife.

A son and daughter were the offspring of the alliance. The former, Count Alexis, had been educated at home under the care of a tutor; while Marguerite, in accordance with the wishes of her maternal grand-mother, had accompanied the old Countess de Vaudreuil on her return to Paris, at the general peace, and been placed in a fashionable convent

of the Faubourg St. Germain.

It is true, the dissipated habits of life of her mother might have afforded a disadvantageous school to the childhood of the young girl. For Countess Erloff, in constant attendance at court, had little leisure to bestow upon her children; and when at fifteen, the young count proceeded to the

military college of Les Pages, for the completion of his education, it would have been difficult to say which was the greater stranger to Madame Erloff, the son reared under her roof, or the timid little pensionnaire

domiciliated in a foreign land.

Frivolous by inheritance, superficial by education, and with no particular call upon her affection from a husband as worldly-minded and even less enlightened than herself, the countess fancied herself fulfilling the purposes of existence by fluttering through life,—well dressed,—well mannered, living from day to day, and devoid of all thought beyond the pleasures of the morrow.

The aristocracy of a country in the earlier stages of civilization, is sure to be dissipated and thoughtless. On throwing off the sheep-skin mantle of its Muscovite barbarity, Russia, as the readiest paraphernalia of state, had assumed, with its crimson velvet and ermine, the unprincipled levities of that of Versailles; and during the reign of Alexander, which was one of favouritism, the court became a temple of marble, at once cold, polished, and deriving its light and heat from artificial means. Prodigality was the order of the day; and the courtiers, like those of Louis XV., took pride in ruining themselves, in order that their debts might be paid by their royal master.

Unluckily, at the very moment the ruin of Count Erloff was achieved, a claim was made upon his royal master for the debt of nature. Alexander expired in the prime of life, at Taganrog, and a new order of morality was speedily established by his successor. The Erloffs lost their influence, as they had already lost their fortune; and on the death of the count, which occurred within a month of the accession of Nicholas I., it was discovered that little or nothing remained for his

family but the deeply-mortgaged estates entailed upon his son.

This was a severe blow to the countess. It was the first moment of serious reflection forced upon her in the course of her life. She was now six-and-thirty; in the wane of her charms; impaired in health by a long series of dissipation, and devoid of the maternal sensibilities which might have taught her that the portion of her life, and noblest part of her mission were still to come. A pension accorded by the emperor, would have enabled her to live with decency, had she been content to retire into the obscurity of private life, and watch over the cares of the young count, who had just entered the army; while from her mother she received constant assurances that Marguerite was becoming all her maternal heart could desire. But the happiness derivable from the discharge of her duties or enjoyment of her natural affections, had no attraction for a woman accustomed through life to flurry and excitement; and the disconsolate widow would almost as soon have followed her husband to the tomb of all the Erloffs, as her fortunes to the small country house, in which it was suggested to her by her family, that her widowhood might be spent to advantage.

On pretence, therefore, of a desire to bring home her daughter, and after ten years' separation, enjoy a reunion with her mother, Madame Erloff obtained the sanction of the emperor to her departure for Paris, with the promise of returning in the spring; but not without secret hopes of obtaining a home with her family, or establishing herself in a

still more satisfactory manner by a second marriage.

But the Countess de Vaudreuil was a Frenchwoman of the old school; which implies a youth of illusions, and a matter-of-fact old age. Having arrived at a time of life when the authority of her director and the positive prevailed over that of the imagination, she assured her dis-

contented daughter that the interests of her son rendered it imperative upon her to fix herself permanently in Russia; that Marguerite, destitute of fortune, could only be suitably married by the influence of her father's connections in her native country. As to a second marriage for herself, nothing could be more chimerical than such a project; for a widow possessing only two portionless children by way of dowry, in a country like France, where marriage is a matter still "dealt with by attorneyship," even where youth and beauty might be supposed to counterbalance the influence of more current coin.

The last storey of the countess's house of cards was thus overthrown by a breath; and as, unluckily, the luxury and elegance of the Parisian circles, of which she obtained a glimpse, served only to stimulate her disgust at the prospect of a life of retirement, she accompanied her daughter back to her adopted country, at the expiration of her widowhood, with increased discontent, finding in the awkward timidity of a

daughter of sixteen little solace for her disappointments.

It was considered indispensable for the countess, whether as widow or mother of an Erloff, to appear at court on occasion of her return, after long absence, to St. Petersburg;—an auspicious necessity, for she had the good fortune to attract the favourable notice of the empress. Enhanced by the advantages of dress, arising from a prolonged sojourn in Paris, the countess, subdued by consciousness of her position, and restored to health by seclusion from the dissipations of the world, appeared to peculiar advantage. No one would have surmised her to be the mother of grown-up children, or on the verge of her eight-and-thirtieth year. Anxiously solicitous to please, she became once more a favourite; and this time in a quarter which allowed no scope for the breath of scandal. Countess Erloff was soon honoured with an appointment in the Imperial household; and thus, from the depths of her mortification, found herself suddenly elevated to happiness and hope.

It was at this period that the Baron von Rehfeld made his appearance in Russia, oppressed by the awkwardness of a reserved man, and the sense of desolation experienced by every stranger in a foreign country; thanks to which the brilliant court of St. Petersburg proved fifty times less social and agreeable than the circumscribed circles of the Residenz. But that his diplomatic cares left him little leisure for discontent, the baron would have perhaps indulged in the grumblings emitted by certain English travellers, who, not being of the court courtly, have written it down in malice that the city of the ezar is, of all the cities of

Europe, most destitute of amusement.

In the course of the summer, at an entertainment given by the imperial family at Tzarsko-çelo, the good offices of the Saxon minister presented him to one or two ladies of the household; and, ere the second winter was at an end, he had discovered that St. Petersburg was, after all, a most agreeable residence; and that if anything exceeded in attraction the society of a highly educated and accomplished Russian, it was that of a Frenchwoman naturalized on the shores of the Neva.

Rehfeld, who had been selected by his prince to adjust certain questions of frontier perplexity, of which his local knowledge and plain good sense rendered him a fitting expositor, was in fact somewhat less amply qualified to shine in a courtly circle. He was a cold, heavy, or rather reserved man, who, beyond the limited circles of the Residenz, knew nothing of the world; and his faculties were more than usually benumbed by the bedazzlement of a stately court and horde of strangers. Unaware of his deficiencies, he was equally blind to the source from

which he derived support and consolation; nor was it till the close of the brilliant winter season that, on discovering he had been spending it highly to his satisfaction, he asked himself the reason; and not only himself, but the whole court of Petersburg, was able to reply that it was because he had passed it at the side of the handsome and agreeable

Countess Erloff!

His mission was now nearly at an end; and the success of his negotiations had been already rewarded by the thanks of his prince, and the affable notice of the emperor. But as the period of his departure drew near, he was startled to find, from the hints of his brother diplomatists, that it was expected at court hisnuptials with the fair and noble widow, so high in imperial favour, would precede his departure. It appeared that, unknown to either of them, he had compromised himself and her. Hints were lavished upon him from what are termed "high quarters," which it was impossible for a man of honour to disregard; the cordial manners and exemplary morality of his own little court, not having prepared him for the interpretation likely to be assigned at Petersburg

to his intimacy with a woman of eight-and-thirty.

Rehfeld's first feeling on the discovery was vexation, his second—delight. A man of moderate understanding is sure to be perniciously influenced by a first false step in life; and having acted in opposition to the principles of his caste and nature in his first marriage, he had ever since assigned undue importance to advantages of birth in a matrimonial alliance. The lady to whom he found himself expected to offer his hand—by birth a Vaudreuil, by marriage an Erloff, by circumstance the favourite of an empress—possessed in his eyes more consequence than could have been imparted by the possession of mercantile wealth, or obscure beauty; and though aware that the elegant establishment of the countess was dependent upon a place at court which she must foreigt by marriage with a foreigner, he allowed himself to dwell upon the event less as an inevitable evil than as a stroke of good fortune.

The address of the lady effected the rest; for she had set her mind upon the match. The advantages of birth and fortune it presented would have scarcely reconciled her to the idea of giving her hand to a mere country baron of the empire; but that, Rehfeld having once figured to advantage in the annals of diplomacy, she trusted to her own skill and influence to attach him for the remainder of his days to

a service so indispensably connected with the pomps of a court.

Such was the origin of the marriage! The Baron von Rehfeld had been hurried into proposing; and even after having arranged with the unreluctant countess that he should return to the Residenz for the completion of his duties and the family arrangements indispensable for her suitable reception, was again hurried into an acceleration of the ceremony. So well had the countess already laid the foundations of his future fortune that a request from the emperor now fixed him as permanent representative of the court of —— at that of all the Russias.

It was the announcement of this unexpected piece of good fortune which, more than all her personal courtesies, reconciled the baron's daughter to the marriage. The ambitious aspirations of Ida von Rehfeld expanded at the idea of transferring her first appearance in society from the insignificant circles of the Residenz to those of a great capital; and though still of opinion that a step-mother would have formed a serious impediment to her happiness, had she been fated to abide in her ancestral domains, she was content to subside into secondary importance, under the protection of a Baroness von Rehfeld, née Vaudreuil,

et veuve Erloff, distinguished by the favours of the sovereign whose smiles were to form the sunshine of her future career. Her only fear was lest the mother of Marguerite, jealous of her rivalship, should consider it expedient to get rid of her by a suitable marriage in Germany, previous to the baron's assumption to his duties of office.

They were to spend another month at Rehfeld. A thousand misfortunes might occur in the interim. The boorish cousin, Wilhelm, who divided his attentions at present equally between herself and Marguerite, might be pressed upon her acceptance by her father; and as there was little fear of the intervention of an heir from the recent marriage of the head of the family, the eligibilities of the connection were only too disagreeably apparent;—more especially since it had been hinted to her of late, by her good nurse, that, in any other baronial family than that of which her father was the head, the deterioration of his own unequal match must severely influence the matrimonial destinies of his daughter.

#### CHAPTER V.

There was just then a kind of a discussion, A sort of treaty or negotiation Between the Prussian cabinet or Russian, Maintain'd with all the due prevarication With which such states such things are apt to push on. Something about the Baltic navigation. Hides, train-oil, tallow, or those rights of Thetis Which Britons deem their uti possiditis .- Byron.

IT was not, however, by way of conciliation to the new lady of Rehfeld that Ida's deportment towards Mademoiselle Erloff soon exhibited an almost sisterly cordiality; for the least observant spectator must have perceived that the maternal sensibility of the baroness was of a very modified character.

But there was something in the gentle character of Marguerite that appealed powerfully to the heart, while it served to stimulate the

curiosity of her step-sister.

In Marguerite Erloff, notwithstanding her half-French, half-Russian origin, Ida beheld the personification of one of the mild visionary maidens so often described by the poets of her own country. Tender, timid, pious, her mind was as devoid of impressions as her heart was replete with sensibility. Educated in strict retirement in one of the severests convents of the Faubourg St. Germain, her exile from her native country had been spent in yearnings after home and mother-love; and when on her recall to Russia, she found only a cheerless publicity instead of the domestic happiness after which she had been sighing: and in place of tender parental love, only the authority, tempered by sarcasm, of a mere woman of the world, the poor girl began to yearn anew for the simple nuns who had superintended her education, and the young companions who used to sympathize in her griefs. Even her occasional visits to the Hôtel de Vaudreuil and the dignified notice of her grandmother had been more cheering than the Russian home, where her mother's constant engagements at court and in society, left her perpetually alone.

The marriage of the countess had been as great a source of satis-

faction to Marguerite as the baron's of vexation to Ida. She rejoiced at the thoughts of exchanging the formalities of a residence in St. Petersburg, for a fine old château surrounded by streams and forests. Marguerite was acquainted with the country only by name. During the ten years of her life capable of conveying lasting impressions, she had been immured within the walls of a city. Rural sights and rural pleasures were consequently a glorious novelty; and the rustling of the trees and murmuring of the waters conveyed as exquisite a pleasure to this girl on the verge of womanhood as a light to the eyes of an infant. Schloss Rehfeld, in short, afforded as new a world to Mademoiselle Erloff as the courtly scenes on which her heart was fixed were about to disclose to the ambitious Mademoiselle von Rehfeld.

Thus is it ever with the human mind; intent upon unknown pleasures and greedy of novel sensations,—weary of happiness, discontented, if the expression be permitted, with content! The easy life led by Ida von Rehfeld, in the home where she was worshipped, had palled upon her feelings and inspired her with feverish longings after the glittering world; while the artificial life of a metropolis had developed the soul of Marguerite with visions of solitude and peace.

"How happy must you have been here!" she exclaimed to her stepsister, one day as they were sauntering together on the terrace of Schloss Rehfeld, enjoying a fine autumnal sunset and awaiting the

return of the baron and his guests from a distant battue.

"Happy!" was the involuntary ejaculation of her companion.
"Rather say devoid of care. The absence of pain does not surely

constitute the existence of pleasure!"

"Does it not?" demanded Marguerite, with wondering eyes. "Surely it is enough for happiness to live with those who love us; and above all, in a beautiful spot like this, with shadowy woods around us and

yonder noble river sweeping in the distance."

"I admire them very much at this moment," said Ida, frankly, "because they seem to afford you pleasure; but I confess to you I have often longed for companionship calculated to impart some charm to a landscape which has met my eyes every day of my existence, and taught me to long for change of scene. Russia will afford me all the

pleasure you are good enough to find at Rehfeld."

"I fear not," said Marguerite, despondingly. "I fear you will often long, at St. Petersburg, for the soft atmosphere and noble prospects of this happy spot. You have very little idea of the life of confinement and ceremony to which you are about to be subjected. Once presented at court, you will live in a continual round of society;always over-heated and over-lighted rooms; -always glare and tumult. Indeed, indeed, you will only too soon learn to regret the serenity and independence of this place."

Ida could scarcely refrain from a smile. But it was useless to argue with the simplicity of heart of her companion. Leaving Marguerite, therefore, to include in romantic adoration of the ancient oaks of Rehfeld, and to listen, with veneration, to the legends attached by old Sara to the ancestral portraits adorning the picture gallery, she had no difficulty in obtaining, from Mademoiselle Thérèse, all the sympathy

she desired in her change of prospects.
When, in the course of their first private interview, the baron appealed to the filial duty of his daughter to treat with becoming deference and regard the lady of his choice, he had judged it un-necessary to explain to one so young those deficiencies of fortune which

had, perhaps, influenced the imperial favourite to bestow his hand upon a foreigner. He had only enlarged the more upon her influence at court, and her share in procuring him the appointment so flattering to his pride and so advantageous to his prospects; and it was consequently impossible for Ida, the daughter of a portionless and obscure mother, to entertain disparaging views of the personal consequence of her step-mother.

In these deferential opinions, she was now confirmed by Mademoiselle Thérèse; who, on finding in the dreaded Russian countess a daughter of the noble house of Vaudreuil, and an agreeable pleasure-loving woman, in place of a "haughty Russian," could scarcely conceal her joy at the prospect of bidding adieu, under such auspices, to the

cheerless solitudes of Rehfeld.

"Between my rheumatism and the utter savageness of the place, another winter here would have been the annihilation of me!" was her secret reflection, after accepting the proposition of the baroness that she should return with the family to Russia, and take the charge of both her daughters. Thus encouraged in her altered feelings towards Madame von Rehfeld, and enlivening projects for the future, Ida soon became as much elated by the rash step taken by her father,

as in the first instance she had been shocked and dispirited.

It was only the faithful old servitors of the family, Johann and Sara, who still remained of opinion that the baron would live to repent his hasty marriage; and that the fickle daughter of the baronial house, who evinced so little regret at the prospect of her approaching exile, might live to sigh in bitterness of spirit for the tranquil home of her fathers and the simple cordiality of her native land. For, alas, while Marguerite counted with regret the days remaining to her of their sojourn at Schloss Rehfeld, Ida could scarcely conceal her impatience

for the moment of their departure!

Preoccupied by projects for the future, shaped after the brilliant programme unfolded to her expectations by the baroness, Ida took no further heed than the ceremonial of life rendered indispensable of the guests connected with the Residenz, who, a few weeks before, had assumed such importance in her eyes; and neither knew nor heeded that the ladies of the court of —, who came prepared to take offence at the new baroness, took far greater at her step-daughter; quitting the castle with the impression that the future bride of their popular young countryman, Wilhelm von Rehfeld, was haughty, reckless, and disobliging, in a degree which even her rare loveliness and brilliant

"Thank Heaven, all those tiresome people are gone at last!" she exclaimed, shrugging her shoulders, one morning, as the last carriage

drove from the court-yard.

talents did not suffice to atone.

"I fancied they were your relations?" observed Mademoiselle Erloff,

to whom the obversation was addressed.

"Relations who are less than acquaintance," replied Ida, "and whom I have no wish to make my friends. Of what use is the relationship that affords one neither pleasure nor distinction?"

"I should think it might sometimes afford comfort," replied Marguerite, gently. "But I forgot; you have never had occasion to make the discovery. You have never needed comfort;—never been away from your own home—your own country."

"I shall be so shortly," replied Ida, with an exulting smile. "But I cannot imagine that St. Petersburg will teach me to affix a value to

my father's humdrum cousins. That unsufferable old Baron Grünglatz. for instance, with his natural history, his birds and butterflies, and the great pet moth which he keeps in a glass cage!—What satisfaction or profit could one derive from such a man?"

I assure you I found him very amusing in the walk we took together yesterday, in the woods, while you were with the hunting party," said

Marguerite, with earnest simplicity.

"True! Mademoiselle Thérèse told me the old gentleman had made a convert of you; and that you nearly beguiled her into a morass, hunting after curious mosses for his herbal."

By your own account, dear Ida," rejoined her companion, laughing, "my cousin, Alfred de Vaudreuil, betrayed you into still greater danger yesterday, by inducing you to leap the stone dyke where Prince Gallitzin met with his fall."

"Believe me, it was well worth while," cried Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, "if only for the satisfaction of seeing the poor dear prince lying wigless among the weeds. You can scarcely imagine anything more seriously comic, or comically serious, than his countenance, when he rose and shook himself, in order to ascertain what bones were broken."

"But he had a right to look serious," remonstrated Marguerite, gravely; "for he was so much hurt that, to-day, he keeps his room."

"He deserves to be hurt. What right has a man of his sober years

to be playing boy's tricks with Monsieur de Vaudreuil?"

"I never allow myself to laugh at the prince," replied Marguerite, artlessly.

"Indeed! Poor old gentleman!" cried Ida, still indulging in her mirth.

"Why poor?" demanded Marguerite, gravely.

"Thus to have forfeited his sole attraction! I thought he was good

only to be laughed at!"

"My mother has a great regard for him," replied Mademoiselle Erloff; "and even if I thought his conduct blameable, I should not presume to criticise it, because --- " she paused.

"Because what?" demanded her more vivacious companion.

"Because, -- but I have no right to talk about it!" resumed Marguerite, checking herself.

"If you have no confidence in me, you are right to be on your guard,"

observed Ida, coldly, preparing to leave the room.

"But I have confidence in you; and I am not on my guard. I am never on my guard with you," cried Marguerite, affectionately, and with a blushing cheek. "Only I know that my mother particularly dislikes her plans and projects to be prematurely discussed; and as it was not directly from herself I received my intimation of her views concerning Prince Gallitzin-"

Again she paused; and Ida, who had the habit of connecting every-body's views and projects with herself, was now really interested.

"It was my brother Alexis," continued Mademoiselle Erloff, perceiving that her step-sister waited with eager looks for the sequel, "who once hinted that mamma had set her heart upon marrying me, at some future time, to the prince."

"You?-to the prince?" cried Ida, all her gravity again forsaking

her. "Why he is forty years older than either of us!"

"Not quite so much as forty," rejoined the matter-of-fact Marguerite. "At all events, he is old enough to be your father."

"My father was old enough to be my mother's," observed Mademoiselle Erloff. "Yet I believe they were very happy together."

"Had they been nearer of an age, his widow might not have thought of a second marriage; and then, we should never have become acquainted," said Ida, kindly. "On any other grounds, I see nothing to praise in such disproportion of years."

"You are rich-your father is still alive to protect and forward your interests," said Marguerite, humbly. "My mother often reminds me that those who, like herself or her daughter, are portionless, must be content to be chosen, not to choose. I ought to esteem myself fortunate, indeed, should I be chosen by one who offers nothing more repellant than his gray hairs. Prince Gallitzin is a man of the highest reputation. and holds a brilliant position in the world."

"Why not place the latter recommendation in due order of prece-

dence?" observed Ida, archly.

"Because, to me, it is not his first recommendation. I should prefer a less public career than must attend his wife."

"If his wife attained any influence over him, I imagine she might

direct his career as she pleased," observed Ida, carelessly. "I fear not !- His fortune is not very considerable, and-"

"I thought you spoke of him just now as a brilliant match?" "Brilliant for me, and in my peculiar circumstances. So at least my mother described him to Alexis, who seemed gratified by the project. Though only a younger branch of the vast family of Gallitzins, the prince is highly considered in his own country, as one of the most eminent of our diplomatists. It is expected he will obtain the first vacant embassy; and the emperor is supposed to have sufficient regard for the memory of my father, to view with satisfaction a match, otherwise, and in point of fortune, so far beneath the pretensions of the prince."

"An ambassadress?" ejaculated Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, again laughing almost beyond the limits of politeness. "Dear Marguerite, forgive me!-But the idea of you, who have not courage to enter the circle of our wretched provincial society here, unless supported by my arm, confronted with royalty and doing the honours of an embassy,

appears to me the most ridiculous thing in the world!"

"Perhaps I should be less timid under such circumstances," said Marguerite, after a moment's deliberation. "Here, I feel myself to be an interloper; there, I should be supported by the position and character of my husband."

The word "husband" from the lips of Mademoiselle Erloff, grated on the ear of Ida. Nevertheless, she could not refrain from exclaiming.—

"Dearest Marguerite! it must be my fault if you have ever felt an interloper at Rehfeld. I should not easily forgive myself, if I thought you considered yourself in any other light than as my sister, and the daughter of the house."

Tears, which had been trembling in the eyes of Mademoiselle Erloff,

were with difficulty restrained from falling, as she replied,—

"Now, perhaps!-now, indeed, dearest Ida, you are all that I could wish, and more than I dared to hope. But if you knew what tortures I underwent during the first few days! I saw how much you disliked and mistrusted us all, on our first arrival. My mother had prepared me to expect from you hauteur and opposition; and at first, I saw with trembling, how completely her predictions were likely to be verified. Remember how coldly you treated me! Even your cousin's goodnatured notice of the poor stranger at Rehfeld, did not suffice to make

me feel otherwise than an alien."

An involuntary blush overspread the features of Mademoiselle von Rehfeld. She could not but perceive that the kinsman whom she despised as a clodpole, had displayed higher breeding in this instance than herself

"And when is this marriage between you and the old prince likely

to take place?" she demanded, trying to rally her spirits.

"I have told you all I know on the subject," replied Marguerite, mildly.

"But have you no curiosity to make inquiries on the subject?"

inquired Ida, almost impatient of her languor.

"I could scarcely have done so without displeasing my mother," she replied. "It is for her to dispose of my destinies. When she wishes me to know her intentions, she will doubtless signify

them.

Ida was startled, almost alarmed, by indications of such implicit filial submission. It occurred to her, that a time might come when some sacrifice imposed upon herself would demand similar obedience. Hitherto, her father's exactions had been so few and reasonable, that the rein of duty had been unfelt. But since his new wife demanded such blind and abject deference of her children, what security had Ida that her own destinies might not be submitted to authority equally

arbitrary?

After Mademoiselle Erloff had quitted the room, however, her reflections assumed a different colour. Though her admiration of Marguerite's guileless and feminine gentleness was a genuine feeling, these first kindly sentiments towards her step-sister had been prompted by a consciousness of superiority. Marguerite was beneath her in personal beauty, beneath her in fortunes, beneath her in abilities; and superior only in the modesty of nature, which enabled her to recognize and submit to these distinctions of their relative position. But Marguerite, about to become a princess—about to become an ambassadress,—was a different personage. Ida felt that it would be difficult to forgive the acquirement of such advantages. Nay, she even began to mistrust the humility of the young Russian, as simply an exercise of patience while

awaiting the advent of more auspicious fortunes.

"After all," mused Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, in the spirit which had prompted her former rebellious disgusts against the obscure monotony of her natural home,—"after all, in Russia, even if favoured as now by the baroness, and beloved as ever by my father, I must still be a stranger—an alien. My position will be one of utter insignificance. Even as daughter to one of the members of the diplomatic body, it must be most subordinate. The envoy of one of the petty states of the empire must rank immeasurably below the ambassadors of the great powers—and his daughter immeasurably below theirs. As to marriage, the emperor is said to oppose the alliance of his more influential subjects with foreigners of whatever rank. In Russia, therefore, I can make only very inferior connections; while Marguerite, timid, unambitious, poor—Marguerite, who is grateful for the attentions of a Wilhelm von Rehfeld, is about to obtain the highest precedence, and to command the brightest destinies!"

Though Mademoiselle Erloff had exacted no promises of discretion, Ida felt, herself interdicted from discussing this flattering project of alliance even with their common precentress. But it was not the

less constantly the subject of her reflections, from the impossibility

under which she laboured of giving way to her surprise.

She now began for the first time to consider with interest the grave and somewhat formal man who was about to elevate her companion to dignities so unexpected. Unconsciously to herself, Ida had suffered her vanity to be flattered during the preceding month of festivities by the attentions of the young Count de Vaudreuil, a near kinsman of the baroness, who was on his return to Paris, after a summer tour to the bathing-places of Germany. Alfred was gay, good-looking, well bred. The playful and somewhat sarcastic turn of his mind had served to recommend him to her favour, more especially when his sallies were directed against the recreant cousin, who had been judged unworthy her notice till he saw fit to accord his own to a rival.

Unaccustomed to the gallantry of French manners, Ida interpreted the flowery compliments of the lively Parisian into expressions of warm admiration. Like a European accepting as positive the hyperbolical offers of service of an Oriental host, she seriously believed herself, when assured that she was mise à ravir, or that she sang comme un ange, to be angelic and enchanting in the eyes of one who probably saw in her

only the pretty but affected daughter of a hobereau de l'empire.

But that he was an inmate under her father's roof, and that his cousin, the baroness, had begged him to be gracious to even the remote branches of the family tree on which her poverty had compelled her to engraft herself, Alfred de Vaudreuil would not in the first instance have so far derogated from his habits of life, or outraged the usages of his country, as to devote the slightest attention to an unmarried girl, even if an angel, or, better than an angel, an heiress. On his arrival at Rehfeld with the bridal party, which he joined at the Residenz on his way from the baths of Töplitz, he had resigned himself to the corvée of being civil to the provincial damsel, whose good will was indispensable to the happiness of his pretty cousin Marguerite, in whom he was interested from having seen her in his earlier days enjoying her conventual holidays in the solemn saloon of their common relative, the old Countess de Vaudreuil.

By degrees this feeling of concession assumed another form. In Ida he recognized a kindred spirit. He found her quick-witted and scornful, and, urged by the instinct of Parisian self-sufficiency, whispered to himself that she was almost worthy to have been a countrywoman of

his own.

Still his feelings were far from being touched in the tender point conjectured by the inexperience of Mademoiselle von Rehfeld. Even at the most critical moment of the compliments in which she placed her girlish faith, he was fully alive to her provinciality; and it was Alfred eVaudreuil who had originally urged the baroness to remodel the dress of her fair step-daughter after the elegant simplicity of his

cousin Marguerite.

"Poor child! Let us have some mercy on her susceptibility," was the rejoinder of Madame von Rehfeld. "Her little head has been filled by the vulgar adulation of servants, with absurd notions of her own self-consequence. To tell her at once that she is a mass of conceit and vulgarity, would precipitate her too cruelly from her pedestal, and her spirit would break in the fall. We must achieve her reformation by degrees. With Marguerite ever before her eyes, she will discover the bad taste of her tone of assumption. To humiliate a person too severely, is to make an enemy for life."

It was soon, however, the baroness's turn to remonstrate with Alfred

on his injudicious treatment of her step-daughter.

"I am thankful to you," said she, "for the nints you amount if am thankful to you," said she, "for the nints you amount if am thankful to you," said she, "for the nints you amount in the said she, "for the nints you amount in the said she," said she, "for the nint concerning the habits of civilized life. dress, conversation, are lessons that convey more than you intend, or at least more than I desire. This poor girl, unconscious of your motives, will fancy you profoundly interested in her improvement, and, so far from rendering her more humble, cher petit cousin, you have increased her vanity a thousandfold."

Vaudreuil had now, however, discovered a singular charm in the loveliness and brilliancy of Ida, owing probably to the absence of better amusement in the circumscribed circle of Schloss Rehfeld. attention became modified, in presence of his observant kinswoman, they were redoubled in the thousand opportunities afforded by their hunting parties and petits jeux; and the mystery in which he now affected to envelop his devotion served only to increase its charm. The compliments which had soothed when said, enchanted when whis-Vaudreuil himself experienced all the charm of prohibition in the intimacy; and Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, accepting his exaggerated declarations of sentiment as credulously as some poor Indian the glass beads of a new settler, ran considerable risk of having her feelings

entangled in a dangerous and fruitless attachment.

Such was the state of affairs when new feelings were opportunely called into existence by the revelations of her step-sister; by which the vanity of Ida received a shock secondary only to that arising from the marriage of her father. In her intimacy with the Parisian kinsman of her new connection, she had taken no thought beyond the amusement of the moment; and now, startled into self-possession, she recalled to mind that she had been committing herself in the eyes of Prince Gallitzin, and the whole circle, by accepting and encouraging the attentions of a foreign cadet de famille, a bird of passage, who had probably been amusing himself at her expense; while the cunning baroness, sanctioning by non-intervention her seeming levity, was enhancing the charm of her daughter's feminine modesty of deportment in the eyes of the future ambassador.

Vain of her supposed conquest, Ida had, in fact, resisted and resented the private representations of her faithful and well-intentioned, though somewhat frivolous governess, that her familiarity with a man of Count Alfred de Vaudreuil's age, with whom she had no ties of consanguinity, was contrary to les bienséances. Persuaded that Mademoiselle Thérèse was lecturing her at the instigation of her solemn cousin Wilhelm, who, ere he quitted Schloss Rehfeld, had afforded unmistakable tokens of disapproval. Ida persisted in encouraging the sallies of the young count

at his expense, both by her plaudits and rejoinders.

She now recalled to mind the grave countenance with which the taciturn prince had occasionally listened to these effusions of flippancy. She had more than once detected him with his eyes and ears inquisitorially fixed upon her proceedings, and had at first secretly accused him of officiating as the spy of her step-mother. She now saw his conduct in a different point of view. He was probably congratulating himself on the superiority of mind and manners of his gentle Marguerite. Arrived at St. Petersburg, he would perhaps withdraw his notice from one so ill-versed in the graces and decorums of the great world, and, on his marriage, interdict all further intimacy between herself and the future ambassadress.

The speculations of poor Ida on these points were not of long dura-But ere she had determined on the line of conduct to be adopted. Prince Gallitzin, preparatory to the general break-up of the party, quitted the hospitable roof of Rehfeld for an excursion to Dresden and Berlin, previous to his return to Russia; and the following day the baron himself, who was compelled to a week's sojourn at the court of the Residenz, for the renewal of his instructions and arrangement of his family interests, took his departure.

Till within a few days of leaving Schloss Rehfeld, it had been arranged that, on the very eve of their departure for the Residenz, the Count de Vaudreuil was to commence his journey southward on his return to Paris.

"We shall, at least, be on the road at the same moment, enduring the same hazards of time and tide, and fixing our eyes at midnight on the same fair stars!" was his significant whisper to Ida, as he stood beside her one morning in the old picture-gallery, where she was taking an unreluctant farewell of the grim faces of the barons of her race.

"You, on your way to the renewal of former pleasures; I on mine, I trust, to inauguration into new ones!" was the careless reply of Made-

moiselle von Rehfeld.

"New ones that will soon obliterate all trace of those happy moments which must render my attempts at renewal hopeless ones!" replied

the count, more in earnest than he intended, or suspected.

"It is no great compliment to you," faltered Ida, in reply, " to admit that I had far rather pass my noviciate in Paris, than in St. Petersburg; or if perforce at St. Petersburg, that I heartily wish you were about to

share my experiment."

To so frank a declaration, Alfred replied of course by a whisper so low, that its purport, had any third person been present, could only have been surmised from the heightened colour of the auditress. But at that moment, and before the confusion of either had abated, Mademoiselle Erloff, breathless and terrified, rushed into the gallery, imploring their instant aid in behalf of Mademoiselle Thérèse, who, in the hurry of the arrangements consequent upon their approaching departure, had undergone a severe fall down the marble steps of the grand staircase, and was writhing in agony at the bottom.

The alarm was soon given in the château, the sufferer removed, and the usual allowance of sympathy and eau de Cologne administered. At first, the injury was pronounced by village authority to be a fracture of the leg. But the nature of the accident requiring instant surgical assistance, it was soon discovered that the still more tedious evil of a dislocation formed the limit of the evil; whereupon the baroness was

heard to ejaculate, more audibly than politeness rendered desirable,—
"A dislocation of the ankle? Thank heaven! I was sadly afraid our journey would have been delayed. A dislocation is nothing so

serious as to require our presence."

"But poor Mademoiselle Thérèse will not be able to put her foot to the ground for six weeks or two months to come!" was Marguerite's innocent remonstrance—Ida being fortunately absent, engaged in

attendance upon the sufferer.

"I know it, child, I know it!" rejoined the baroness. "In either case, her accompanying us would be out of the question; a contretemps, certainly, for I shall find it difficult to procure for you a demoiselle de compagnie of equally good manners with cette pauvre Thérèse, on whom I can implicitly rely. Anything better, however, than a compulsory

delay; which I suppose must have been borne with had there been danger, or anything of that kind. As it is, the invalid will be excel-lently taken care of during her illness, by the worthy old heads of the establishment here; and, on her recovery, may still rejoin us in the spring-if, indeed, she feel inclined to brave the ill omens preceding

her Russian journey."

By the baron and his daughter, the accident that deprived them of a kind and trustworthy assistant, was somewhat more compassionately considered. With all her self-reliance, Ida recoiled from the idea of the isolation in which she was about to depart for a foreign country: and tears, which she had little expected to fall from her eyes on quitting her long-distasteful home, moistened the pillow of the poor disappointed governess, as her pupil bent over her for a farewell embrace.

"Do not weep thus, dear child!" faltered she, in the sanguine spirit of her country. "Trust me, my sweetest Ida, I shall have courage to rejoin you, the moment the effects of this unlucky accident have disappeared. If Peter had only been in the way to carry down the chess-box and work-box of Madame la Baronne, which I had in my arms when my foot slipped, this horrible disaster would not have

happened!"

'But you will never be able to undertake so long and arduous a

journey alone?" remonstrated Mademoiselle von Rehfeld.

"Oh! yes, I am afraid of nothing. My heart is full of spirit and adventure. I travelled, you know, from Paris to Dresden alone. I admit that it would have been far more agreeable to make the journey to St. Petersburg in your company, dearest Ida; and if Peter had only been in the way to carry down the ---"

"But a long confinement at Schloss Rehfeld, chère bonne!" again interrupted Ida, in a tone of sincere commiseration. "I cannot bear

to think of the dreariness of your long winter here!"

"Think rather, then, of my good fortune in not having broken my leg, and possibly been lamed for life!" cried the cheerful-minded Frenchwoman. "I consider myself lucky it is no worse; and though,

if Peter had been in the way to--"

"If you feel at all alarmed at the idea of remaining here alone, I will still entreat papa to allow me to bear you company, and rejoin him with you in the spring," faltered Ida, conscious that the offer of such a sacrifice was due to her kind old friend, yet somewhat alarmed lest it

should be accepted.

"And so lose the pleasures of the carnival, and the galas at court? Not for twenty thousand worlds, my dear child!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Thérèse, with real warmth and sincerity. "No, no!-it is perhaps better for you, who have been so little accustomed to make your own way in the world, to be at length thrown upon your own resources. Besides, dear Ida, we shall enjoy a constant correspondence! Think what delight it will afford me, in my sick room, to receive your gay and original remarks upon a new country-a new courta new people! Conceive all the novel impressions you will have to receive and communicate!"

"A poor compensation for all your sufferings!" sighed Mademoiselle

von Rehfeld, consciously.

"But you owe me no compensation, my dear child. You had no share in the accident. You have often warned me, Ida, against those slippery marble stairs; and had not Peter been out of the way at that moment, when his services were particularly required to carry down things for packing the fourgon, I --- "

"At all events, I engage that both Marguerite and myself will prove most assiduous correspondents," interposed Ida. "You shall have the fullest details of all we see, hear, or imagine. Nay, do not thank me for the promise! It will be the greatest comfort to me to find myself still in intimate communication with my kindest of friends."

But though nothing could be more sincere than Ida's lamentations over this unexpected separation from the preceptress whose instructions had afforded her first insight into the pleasures of society, and cheered the flight of her young ambition, she was almost consoled for her loss, on learning that the baroness had succeeded in inducing Monsieur de Vaudreuil to accept the place in their travelling party left vacant by the absence of Mademoiselle Thérèse. The count had long thrown out hints that persuasion only was wanting to determine him to the sacrifice of a winter in St. Petersburg, in order to prolong his association with a circle so delightful; and Rehfeld, whose taciturnity of nature was relieved by the presence of a voluble and agreeable inmate, and who was perhaps a little gratified by the idea of reappearing in Russia, supported by one of the nearest family connections of the abroness, was so warm in his invitations, that nothing appeared more natural than this sudden change of plan. It was, of course, only to Mademoiselle von Rehfeld's private ear Count Alfred saw fit to disclose the more secret motives of his resignation of his beloved Paris, in favour of the frozen shores of the Neva!

The following week found the whole party undergoing the peine forte et dure of the duodecimo courtiership of the Residenz; and it needed all the deference exacted by Ida's filial duty, and the sense of politeness of his new relatives, to conceal from Baron von Rehfeld the impatience with which they submitted to the impediment to their journey, produced by that absurd Ko Too of courtly state, which is redeemed from the ridiculous only when practised on a sufficient scale. The miniature Versailleship of —— was accordingly an object of such poignant ridicule to the Count de Vaudreuil, that Ida could scarcely

pardon herself for having ever regarded it with respect.

A fortnight later and she was enabled to discover that nearly the same ceremonies she had contemned as puerile in a duchy, commanded her reverence as august, when invested with the colossal proportions of

an imperial court.

In order, however, to do justice to her impressions under circumsances so exciting, it may be as well to snatch from the hands of the courier the correspondence of Ida von Rehfeld and Marguerite Erloff with Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau, as well as of Count Alfred de Vaudreuil with various members of his family; and more than one circle, closely connected with the Imperial Court of 182-, will be found authentically portrayed in the following letters.

### Letter I.—From Ida von Rehfeld to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

AT length, chère bonne, our object is accomplished, and I am able to date my letter in good fair round text from "St. Petersburg." Yes! your poor rustic child of Schloss Rehfeld, is now an inhabitant of the capital of all the Russias!

How grand an air the name caries with it—"Capital of All the Russias!" Yet you and Alfred de Vaudreuil have done your best to convince me, that all the Russias, red, white, or black, in combination,

are scarcely to be weighed in the balance against your single France or rather Paris, for neither of you appear to recognize much beyond the walls of that glorious (or dare I say it?) vain glorious city!

Do not forget, dearest bonne, that, as regards our correspondence, you have been considerate enough to renounce all former privileges of office; and that I am to open my heart to you as to a wiser and better self, or more truly, as to the most indulgent of friends. I have undertaken to make you forget the distance intervening between us: while you must promise to overlook that of our relative age and position, and condescend to treat me as a woman, in order that I may become one the sooner.

We arrived here the day before vesterday. Accept us, therefore, as fairly settled. Marguerite, who is fond of such details, assures me she has given you a full account of our journey and its grievances, minor and major; which, had you seen how impatiently they were endured by Count Alfred, you might have estimated as of some importance. But my uneventful life has taught me to regard such contrarieties as the inconveniences of a way-side inn, as a relief, after the monotony of Schloss Rehfeld; and could anything have amused me more than our bad suppers and the strangeness of the people by whom they were served, it would have been the indignation of the baroness and Monsieur de Vaudreuil; both of whom ended by becoming seriously angry with me, for my indifference to their martyrdom.

Enough, however, of a journey which, since my mind misgives me that you will scarcely find courage to rejoin us on your restoration to health, cannot be very interesting. Suffice it that we are here, with our due allowance of limbs; and that a couple of days has enabled even the grumblers to recover the fatigues of the expedition, and the jolting

over the timbered roads which Alfred found so detestable.

At present, the winter sets in with scarcely more severity than our own; but the Neva is beginning to freeze, which is the signal for its We reside in a street opening on the Nevskoi Prospekt, which Marguerite calls the Rue St. Honoré of St. Petersburg; being a league and a half in length, and containing in its successive districts the handsomest shops and noblest private houses. It is truly an imperial causeway. Our house, or, as Wilhelm von Rehfeld would call it, the Hotel of the Legation, has a courtyard in front and garden behind; closely resembling, according to Monsieur de Vaudreuil's account, those of the Faubourg St. Germain. My father's apartments, which are spacious and handsome, are on the ground-floor; those of the baroness on the first, and Marguerite and I have two charming little suites adjoining. There is an empty set of rooms on the second-floor, which my father offered to the use of Count Alfred. But I conclude he preferred independence; as he has installed himself in an hôtel garni, the Hotel Demuth-said to be the best here, but which he declares to be the most detestable in the world. All travellers, however, even the least fastidious, agree in condemning the public accommodations in St. Petersburg.

And now, dearest, how shall I admit to you, in the name of your two disciples, that Marguerite evinces as little patriotism on her return to her native country, as your ungrateful Ida on quitting Germany? Tell it not to the good pastor—publish it not to my excellent Sara! But even as I bade a long farewell to our forests without a particle of regret, did Marguerite, after four months' absence, salute the shores of the Neva, with tears in her cyes. It promises ill for my happiness here, that Mademoiselle Erloff should see so much to regret in a dull

château of our obscure province! But I comfort myself by the suspicion that her timidity and indolence render the stirring life of this city distasteful to her; for the baroness still persists in assuring me that, out of Paris, St. Petersburg affords the most agreeable residence in Europe. Will not this tempt you to renounce your projects, ere you settle for the remainder of your days in the Rue du Bac; and take a peep at your child, playing her new part in her new home?

But for the week we spent at the Residenz after leaving Rehfeld, I should have been terrified by the tumults of this place. Alfred de Vaudreuil protests, on the contrary, that it is only a splendid desert; and has already pronounced the capital of all the Russias to be right

worthy a population of bears.

To me, everything appears new, grand, and exciting. My father's establishment is on a scale suitable with his fortune and diplomatic position; and, being arranged by the baroness essentially  $\partial la$  Russe, I am not a little amused by the multiplicity of servants, who seem to

render the whole house an ante-chamber.

The apartments appropriated to reception are magnificently furnished, the inlaid parquets beautiful. The scagliola—particularly that which imitates alabaster—is dazzlingly brilliant; and the baroness's boudoir, hung with dove-coloured silk and ornamented with a beautiful set of malachite vases and tables presented to her by the empress on

her marriage, is elegance itself.

My own little drawing-room and bed-room, by an act of gracious kindness on the part of Madame von Rehfeld, are arranged precisely in the style of those I occupied at home. I accept with gratitude this token of conciliation; but must confess that I had pondered long enough over those old hangings and fauteuils to have been as well satisfied with newer objects. Entre nous, I could have been content to bequeath my cousin Wilhelm and the yellow curtains to Schloss Rehfeld! But for the fear of offending my step-mother, I would have proposed transferring both the heavy furniture and heavy kinsman to her daughter; our dear, good, simple Marguerite still persisting in her enthusiasm for all things German.

You will be diverted to learn, chère bonne, that already a cabinet council of mantua-makers and milliners has been gathered together, preparatory to our presentation at court. French, of course; everything here connected with fashion being as Parisian as yourself. In spite of the emperor's remonstrances and prohibitions, the ladies of the imperial family, and those immediately surrounding them, persist in importing all they wear from Paris. Just as you once told me the Empress Joséphine used to torment and irritate Napoleon by wearing India muslins and British lace, does our empress delight in being the least Russian possible in matters of the toilet. Perhaps it would be as well if legislators let such trifles alone. But legislators have always pretended that the greatest matters consist in a concatenation of trifles; and I will, therefore, take for granted that the prosperity of Russia is seriously compromised by the cases of caps, hats, and manteaux de cour, which reach the imperial palace from the hands of Herbault and Victorine.

I write to-day, only to announce our inauguration. By the next courier I shall have more to tell you than that, in spite of the untold number of versts dividing us, I am with my dear bonne in the spirit; wanting only her presence to complete my happiness, both present and

in anticipation. Farewell!

Letter II. - From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to his Brother Count Jules, in Paris.

In spite of your remonstrances, dear Jules, me voici !—ay, here,—here, at St. Petersburg, in the half-civilized capital of a scarcely quarter-

civilized empire!

When I mentioned, in my last letter, that I had given up the project, I was sincere. But what would you have? Man proposes, woman disposes! On quitting Baden, last August, I found myself with a couple of idle months on my hands, previous to the commencement of our Paris season. You would not have had me instal myself in our dear dull Faubourg till the Italian Opera was open, or your own return from Burgundy? A tour through Germany presented itself as an agreeable alternative. Carlsbad and Töplitz were new to me. I wanted to see the Dresden gallery—I wanted to see Leipzig and visit the spot where my father — But why dwell on these things? It was a your suggestion I extended my travels through Saxony, in search of the more than Gothic domain, where our worthy aunt, the Countess Auguste, insisted upon my visiting her daughter and grand-daughter, that I might satisfy her mind on my return touching this new family alliance.

I found precisely what might have been expected; that is, precisely what I expected; a half-furnished barrack of a house, in the centre of a domain stocked with boar, roebuck, and a German baron as stiff as his own pedigree: and, I should imagine, a head as ill furnished as his château, or he would scarcely have taken to wife our hyperborean cousin, a woman neither young nor pretty, with two grown-up children for her dowry! The Goth, however, was hospitable and civil; and had collected about him a few people, not altogether unbearable; that is, not altogether unbearable considering the excellence of his Jagd and old Hochheimer—the special recommendations of Schloss Rehfeld.

Methinks I hear you exclaim, dear Jules, that, as regards old Hock, our uncle the archbishop's cellars are too well stored to entail the necessity of a visit to the banks of the Oder on any member of our family; while, as to wild boar and roebuck, your estates in Burgundy have been accounted worthy mention in the annals of sportsmanship. True, alas!—a most irrefragable truth! It stands, therefore, confessed that some less ostensible motive must have formed my attraction northward of Töplitz.

If you could see her, my dear Jules, you would forgive my weakness, though it requires something more than the charm of mere beauty, to

induce me to pardon myself.

You and I, who, for the last ten years, ever since we quitted, at fifteen, our quarters at the Collège de Louis le Grand, have been sighing at the feet or in the arms of angels born to invalidate the proverb of "fair as an angel," you and I must candidly admit that, character and expression apart, the faces of our loving countrywomen are anything but celestial. In the inexperience of boyhood, I plead guilty chaving found a charm in more than one sallow complexion, deriving character from fine features and an expressive physiognomy. But there comes a time when even the lightnings of the most animated eyes fail to blind one to that deficiency of bloom and youthfulness, which our Parisians acquire even in the fulness of girlhood.

In short, dear Jules (for why weary either you or myself by prolixity), the dark down on the scornful upper lip of cette chère marquise, and the too frequent contraction of the finest eyebrows in the Faubourg St. Germain, had prepared the way for the spell exercised over my feelings by the Saxon beauty and transparent complexion of the lovely Ida. To me, I own, she appeared, on our arrival at Schloss Rehfeld, a

being of a different sphere.

Her manners I found almost as attractive as her person. Were my acquaintance with the Teutonic fair more extensive, I should probably have discerned in her deportment only the ordinary worthfulness—permit me to Saxonize—of homely provincial human nature. But I know little of these people. At Baden, I associated only with our Paris friends; at Carlsbad and Töplitz, with Russians; or at most, a few people from Vienna, who have rubbed off their national virtues and national rusticity. The baron's daughter was consequently the first specimen that met my eye of an inartificiality of manner, easily mistaken at first sight for inartificiality of character. Seeing her so unversed in the habits of society, I set her down as an original of the ingénues of our stage,—a species unknown among ourselves, saving in theatricals.

In the beginning, therefore, I patronized her as a child,—an awkward, pretty, well-meaning child; nor was it till I had been startled by two or three astringent repartees, that I allowed myself to discover,—I was going to say, a snake in the grass, but beg you will substitute some

more courteous expression.

I was disappointed. I wanted to find my flaxen angel with the soft down of angelic purity on her wings, as different in mind as in person from our more piquant charmers of the Faubourg. It did not suit my prejudices that this fairest of lilies should prove as thorny as

all my other roses.

The mystery was soon explained. You, my wise brother, who are cautious enough never to lose sight of your beloved Seine; you, an enfant des Boulevards (as Labenski once insultingly called you), have very little idea how searchingly our detestable Parisianism has pervaded Europe,-destroying all nationality, all originality of character. Champagne and French governesses are to be found even in the steppes of Tartary; and it soon appeared that Schloss Rehfeld, like every other Schloss from the Rhine to the Dnieper, contained a certain Mademoiselle Therese something or other, who had done her worst to render my angel witty as well as pretty, and add cloven feet to my Saxon lamb. It is the custom of Paris, it seems, to export last year's fashions, faded bonnets and soiled laces, to England, Russia, America, and other outlandish countries, where they still retain the gloss of novelty. the same manner, when a governess is pronounced incompetent, or becomes superannuated in Paris, she is shipped off to preside over the education of some heiress in Great Britain, or countess of the Russian empire. Should you ever renounce your vocation, Jules, and become a travelled man, let this plead in extenuation of the singularly bad manners of certain ultra-mundane divinities of the highest descent.

The Mademoiselle Thérèse in question is precisely one of those to whom I alluded;—ignorant, like every French woman of fifty, whose education was necessarily arrested by our first fatal revolution;—and having spent the last dozen years of her life, enclosed within the walls of the Hôtel de Choisy, which, I need not remind you, is one of the few that has undergone neither fumigation nor ventilation since the Pom-

padourism of Louis XV. Though she has in some degree respected the simplicity of the poor child's manners,—probably attracted by a sort of Opéra Comique pastorality in the whole thing,—she has at the same time inspired her with notions so strange, that poor Ida's mind presented on our arrival a unique mélange; which I can only exemplify as a groundwork of linsey-woolsey, embroidered with the richest flowers of brocade.

Though for a moment disappointed, I soon began to discover that this was newer and more amusing than if the whole texture had been of linsey-woolsey or brocade. It was a chaos to reduce to order; a labyrinth to unravel. My curiosity was excited; and it is something, allow me to tell you, at our age—for a Parisian, five-and-twenty, ranks with the grand climacteric of any other country in the world—to have one's

curiosity excited.

Fortunately, our excellent cousin favoured its indulgence; perhaps, because apprehensive that I might let fall a withering glance on her own gentle, but insignificant Marguerite—a girl, par parenthèse, whose nature corresponds miraculously with her banat daisy name. For scarcely were we installed at Schloss Rehfeld, when she pointed out to me, in despair, the detestable provinciality of her step-daughter's dress and manners; bewailing her hard fate in having such a mill-stone strung round the neck of her Saxon barony, and imploring my aid in rendering her presentable previous to her début in a more courtly circle.

I did my best; that is, I did my worst. But the task which I had undertaken almost as a *corvée*, became supportable through the aptitude of my scholar. I found that it was a diamond of the first

water, which I had mistaken for a pebble.

I was almost in despair as the period drew near, to which, six weeks before, I had been looking forward as my signal of release from sauer-kraut and sourer bread and wine. Somehow or other, the fair Ida had wound herself, I was about to say, round my heart, but will not insult either your understanding, or my own, by such puerlities. In short, I did not like to part with her—perhaps, because assured that it would

break her little heart to part with me.

The gods and the baroness prospered my repinings. Just as I was beating my brains for a pretext to discover some species of business requiring my presence in Russia (I had almost thought of asking you to beg from your friend Demidoff a superintendency of copper-mines!)—just as I was growing, I say, most sentimentally perplexed, the antiquated damsel who, for the benefit of the family, had better have broken her neck three years ago, had the fortune to break her leg—sprain her ankle—no matter what; and the baroness, who was beginning under my enlightenment, to discover the insufficiency of Mademoiselle Thérèse, eagerly seized upon a pretence to leave her behind.

No sooner was this matter arranged, than she honoured me with a strenuous invitation to accept her place; nay, almost to undertake her vocation as preceptress in the family. A singular notion, you will say! But the poor dear baroness possesses in a supreme degree our family weakness of clanship; and, as becomes a Vaudreuil, believes in my infallibility. Though all she knows of Paris consists in a dreary year of widowhood in the still drearier hotel of the dear old Countess Auguste, she experiences the warmest interest in all things Parisian; and is, moreover, pretty well aware that the presence of such a cavalier as your younger brother, will be no deterioration to her circle in this most savage capital.

"You must positively accompany us, dear cousin," cried she, on the announcement of Mademoiselle Thérèse's misfortune. "You have taught us the difficulty of dispensing with your society. Conceive the acquisition you will be to me."

It was not exactly my importance to the baroness that was likely to determine me to such a journey. Nevertheless, I contrived to look overwhelmed with gratification; having begun to regard Madame von

Rehfeld, née Vaudreuil, as grand jewel-keeper to my crown.

"With so great a charge upon my hands as two unmarried girls, both introduced into society, and without even a dame de compagnie to superintend their proceedings when my position in official society shall require my leaving them at home," said she, "judge what will be my anxieties! My son is absent from St. Petersburg; and were he on the spot, Alexis is too wild and volatile to be trusted as the escort even of his sister. You, my dear Alfred, are essentially a man of the world. To you, two girls of the age of Ida and Marguerite, are no more than two angels carved in alabaster in some ancient cathedral. I am conscious that a Vaudreuil, a man of your birth and breeding, will give them only the best advice, as well as afford them the sort of championship, which the occupations of the Baron von Rehfeld render it impossible to expect at his hands. Received with open arms at the Imperial Court, you will become our cavalier at all the winter fêtes, and I foresee a delightful winter!"

So do I, my dear Jules! For in the sequel, I suffered myself to be persuaded; and here I am, the pet of a family circle, including two of the prettiest girls in St. Petersburg, or any other burg; and a chaperon,

who sees everything I do, say, or imagine, en couleur de rose.

I have, I perceive, left myself no space to glance beyond this charming family circle. But in my next letter expect a detailed picture of what interests you perhaps more than myself—the Russian capital and people.

# Letter III.-From Marguerite Erloff to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

WE are all anxiety, mademoiselle, to learn the progress you have made in your recovery; and, but that I trust the milder climate of your valley has been more auspicious than our Finland gales, I should have noted with fear and trembling the recent severities of weather we have

experienced here.

You may imagine how anxiously I have watched the influence of this severity upon the comfort of our dearest Ida. But she is good enough to fancy that the admirable distribution of our stoves procures her a pleasanter climate than awaited her at home; where she assures me that winter, among the hoary forests of Rehfeld, was frightfully intense. For your sake, mademoiselle, I earnestly hope this may be only a gracious exaggeration on the part of my sister, to spare me the mortification of suspecting her repinings.

Du reste, she is as well in health as gay in spirits. I could almost fancy, from her cheerfulness, that she was aware of the great addition afforded by her society to the happiness of her poor Marguerite. Till my mother's marriage, without any companion of my age, I was discontented with home, disgusted with Russia. I am now the happiest of the happy! My brother is to be here in the course of the ensuing month; and my impatience to see him again is almost forgotten in the

liveliness of Ida's original remarks on the new objects and customs that arrest her notice at every turn, though they have ceased to attract my own. Charming as I found her at Schloss Rehfeld, here she appears to me a thousand times more brilliant and more attractive.

At present, my sister has been little seen in society, the Court having returned only yesterday, so that her presentation has been delayed. The admiration she excites among the chosen few admitted into our private circle, affords every confirmation of my mother's prognostica-

tions, that the Lily of Rehfeld would faire fureur in Russia.

Of our common friends here, I will name only my cousin Alfred, who appears enchanted with his journey; and but for its sad origin in your afflicting accident, I should congratulate myself on our having secured so cheerful a companion to lessen to dearest Ida the sense of loneliness inseparable from sojourn in a strange country. Ida, so gracious in her adoption of my mother as a parent, myself as a sister, appears even to accept Alfred as a kinsman.

Be, therefore, under no uneasiness, mademoiselle, for the happiness of your child. She will be watched over, loved, and tended here, as at Schloss Rehfeld. Your expected letter will, I trust, afford us all that is wanting to our satisfaction, in an account of the improved state of

your health.

Letter IV.—Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to Couniess Auguste de Vaudreuil, in Paris.

Belle tante, I throw myself at your feet, and on your mercy. You are indignant, I find, that, on quitting Paris last May, I did not ask your orders for St. Petersburg. Trust me, I as little contemplated an excursion hither, as at this moment I foresee a voyage to Japan; into which, by the way, I cannot promise that I may not be decoyed by some of the strange navigators and other uninhabitative monsters from the far east, with whom I have already become acquainted since

my be-Muscovitation.

I proceeded, as I then announced to you, with Gustave de Presle, to Baden-Baden; which I found, as usual, vulgarized with English, Belgians, and all the other refuse poured upon our charming frontier by Rhenish steam navigation. The place is ruined—done for—Paradise lost! After the close of a week or two, Gustave discovered that he was losing his money, I my time, without obtaining a particle of enjoyment in return. We started accordingly for Carlsbad; and finding by your letters, forwarded to Töplitz for the announcement of my cousin's marriage, that the new baron and baroness, and our pretty Marguerite, were about to visit their forests, I hastened to pay them in person the united compliments of the house of Vaudreuil, and, in return, became so entangled in the meshes of their cordial hospitality, as to have no resource but to follow them a prisoner to St. Petersburg.

Such is the origin of my exploit, and of an omission which you must not persist in treating as an act of neglect, lest I should become careless of your injunction to me to give you the fullest, truest, and most particular account of the new lord of the Countess Erloff, and the present

state of men, women, things, and nothings, in St. Petersburg.

You, who know something of the mode in which the government of this country is carried on, will be pleased to remember that this is no gratuitous task. I am satisfied that my letters are not only perused whenever occasion offers, by the master of this filthy inn, which has the audacity to call itself the first hotel in Petersburg, (my opinion whereof I hereby inscribe for his benefit), but that they are invariably opened at the post-office. We French are sufficiently objects of animosity here, to render our correspondence an object of imperial solicitude. However, as my letters to you, belle tante, are not quite so urgent in point of punctuality as those of Rothschild, I shall adopt the system of despatching them uniformly through our embassy—the only secure channel of communication.

It is now—let me see—twelve years since you quitted Russia; and though improvement is naturally more perceptible on the outskirts of civilization than in a capital, representing, like our own, the heart's core of European refinement, do not imagine that the traces of its

seven-leagued boots are strikingly evident.

By the first aspect of St. Petersburg, I confess I was startled, probably, should I be that of Paris, were our noble public monuments suddenly to diverge and scatter themselves over thrice the territory on which they are now concentrated; and I was forced to admit that the capital of these savage, tallow-melting Russians, had, in truth, some pretence to the title she arrogates to herself of City of Palaces. But this distinction was nearly as much her own on the day that witnessed the death of the great Catherine, as now: - and it needed only a second glance to discover that the interstitial spaces of this colossal skeleton of a city, are filled with all that is unsightly and all that is common-place. The quays and palaces may be of granite, but the houses which, at first sight, I mistook for stone, are of plastered brick, saving such as are of I found myself gazing upon a Monsieur Jourdain, whose ruffles are of point; while the texture and cleanliness of the garment to which they are appended, remain those of the "bourgeois" before he pretended to the distinction of "gentilhomme." Instead, therefore, of a city of palaces, I inscribed in one of the inner leaves of my pocket-book "city of incongruities."

All this existed in your time. Still, during the reign of the late emperor, who appears to have made up for all the feminine frivolities of taste wanting in his majestic grandmother, there was, I am assured, such a restless striving after improvement, such a pretence to create a new Versailles in a country, which, for three centuries to come, will not be ripe for the creation, and which will then, if unwise enough to engender a production so fatal, find it, as we did, a nursery for the elements of destruction to its monarchical institutions,—that, if nothing important was effected, those who witnessed the solicitudes of Alexander, can

scarcely believe them to have been wholly infructuous.

Now, everything is changed. Russia pretends only to be Russia. The Muscovites have got a giant of brass, in place of a giant of clay;—I trust, at least, that Nicholas will prove himself of brass; for nothing, I am convinced, but the strong arm and ruthless grasp of despotism, will duly restrain those higher classes, which in this country exhibit all the fatal and ferocious impulses of the people of France. The nobility here is ever in a state of secret ferment. They tormented poor Alexander out of his life. May the present emperor of all the bears 'prove made of sterner stuff!

At present, ma belle tante, St. Petersburg conveys to me the impression of one of those grand warehouses one suddenly sees start up in our more fashionable quarter of Paris, transferred from the ultra-commer-

cial mart of the Rue St. Denis; affecting the flashy luxury of modern trade,—plate-glass windows, and counters of polished mahogany,—but retaining the vulgar routine of business of its former fussy, wholesale

quarter of the town.

They still exhibit here, you may remember, the wooden hut in which Peter the Great, father of their savage empire, imbibed the principles of ship-building in the dockyard of Saardam; thereby admitting their principles of naval architecture to be of purely foreign origin. they are too wise to display the cabinet wherein, equally imported from distant lands. Alexander imbibed those singular constitutional crotchets. which he was desirous to render the formation of a new order of mon-I never saw the sovereign who pretended to overstep his century in the civilization of his kingdom, who achieved anything more than a fatal sprain in the effort. Alexander, however, did accomplish somewhat more. Having the good fortune to be succeeded by a brother in the full force and vigour of intellect, instead of a feeble minor issued of his loins, the failure of his well-intended efforts served at least to enlighten his successor. Nicholas, accordingly, began by legislating for Russian nature according to the instigation of Russian nature; instead of according to the Anglo-Gallican and most anomalous Montesquieuism of the imperial disciple of La Harpe, Madame Krudener, and Jeremy Bentham! He is par conséquent, in my humble opinion, the model for a Czar of Muscovy; -hardy, intrepid, inflexible-gentle in his domestic life, as rigid in his public capacity; and is accordingly beloved by his family and adored by his people. I humbly ask pardon of my lovely Polish friends-but so it is !

You did not, however, require politics at my hands; but rather some account of the court and the position likely to be maintained there by

your daughter and new son-in-law.

As regards the latter, you are so moderately pleased with the match, that it is scarcely possible to speak of Baron von Rehfeld in terms that may not place him higher in your favour. It appears to me, that in this respect, you render justice neither to him nor your daughter. What was she to do? Were you not the first to place before her, in stern reality, that among us, in our own sordid, or rather impoverished Faubourg, a Veuve Erloff was a mere dead letter? In Russia, it seems, her chances of an establishment were equally unpromising. The favour she was enjoying was most precarious; and with the prospect before her of an abyss of poverty, into which at any moment she might be precipitated, carrying with her two children reared in the enjoyment of luxury, I cannot but applaud her self-sacrifice, in accepting the hand of a man whose fortune, equalling 80,000 francs per annum, is burthened only with one child, and enhanced by diplomatic distinction.

As regards the man attached to the fortune, there is little to be said; but that little has no drawback from a single offensive particle. Baron von Rehfeld is a bundle of insignificances:—middle-aged,—moderately well-looking,—tolerably well-mannered—sufficiently well-informed—of inoffensive character, and passable abilities. In Paris, one should never have heard mention of his name. At Rehfeld, he is a baron of the heavens know how many quarterings and descents; and at St. Peters-

burg, minister residentiary from the court of —.

What would you have more? The daughter is pretty and pleasing, submissive to the baroness, and affectionate to Marguerite. For the present, this must suffice you. To enable me to reply to your inquiry in

what degree this marriage is likely to influence the favour hitherto enjoyed by my cousin, I must see and judge the autocratic circle: where, if report speak truly, our nation enjoys no very high degree of credit. En attendant, chère tante, je baise très humblement les plus belles mains du monde.

Letter V.—From Ida von Rehfeld to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

THANKS, chère bonne, for such comfortable news of your progressive recovery. Your letters are all I desired. Do not apologize to me for want of news. What news could I possibly expect you to communicate from Schloss Rehfeld?" What could I even wish to know but that you

are better and cheerful?

On the eve of my departure, chère bonne, you exhorted me, above all things, to mistrust my first impressions of a land of strangers. But this was not enough for wisdom:—you should have first bidden me mistrust my presentiments. You talked to me of the sanguine reliance of youth upon superficial attractions. Alas! my youth was sufficiently sanguine to have conjectured attractions without limit and without foundation.

I own I flattered myself, for instance, that my position at the imperial court was to be one of peculiar advantage, as step-daughter to the former Countess Erloff. Judge of my surprise when, on the evening following our arrival here, the baroness summoned me into her boudoir. and addressed me in a confidential tone, with which she never favoured me before, and which she never, at any time, addresses Marguerite,

who, though of my own age, she persists in treating as a child.

"I wish, my dear Ida," said she, "to afford you a few hints on the subject of the line of conduct to be pursued here; your attention to which may be vitally important to your own prospects, as well as to the interests of your father. You possess the intelligence of a woman; and if placed on the footing of one, cannot fail to acquire the tact which, in the higher walks of life, is more indispensable than better things. Without it, the greatest talents are unavailable."

Though I thanked her gratefully for so favourable an interpretation of my poor abilities, I foresaw, from so much conciliation, that some-

thing disagreeable was to follow.

"The position of our family at the imperial court," she resumed, "is one of delicacy and difficulty. On all sides, we are objects of jealousy and opposition. I, in the first place, as a French woman naturalized by marriage; your father, in the second, as a foreign minister, united with one supposed to enjoy the favour of the court. By the native nobility, therefore, as well as by the corps diplomatique, we are viewed with envious mistrust; while the imperial family must so far concede to the malevolence of all parties, as to be guarded in their show of favour.

"Such, my dear child, are the disadvantages under which we labour. I am detested by the mass of society here, as a French woman and a favourite; and you, as belonging to my family, will consequently be exposed to severe scrutiny. Still, by ascertaining one's precise rights upon society, and neither advancing a step beyond the line nor receding from one's place, it is impossible for even the bitterest insolence to humiliate one's feelings. It is not at court, as in the humbler range At court, everybody's position is definite. Your father's diploof life.

matic station is as positively marked out as that of the emperor, or the archimandrite,—I mean of course the station of your father, as well as

that of all belonging to him.

"This you must try to understand. Make it your business to know the precise amount of your consequence; for to aspire to more, would be estimated a vulgar and fatal assumption. Your social pleasures here are not, as in your own country, optional."

Though the baroness had not paused to take breath during this long exordium, I admit that the formality of her address inclined me for some such relief. I was beginning to pant under the oppression of

duties hitherto unsuspected.

"With Marguerite, matters are less urgent," she resumed, not seem-g to notice my annoyance. "She is supported here by the influence ing to notice my annoyance. of her father's connections."

I almost longed to add, "And by reliance on the brilliant marriage you have projected for her;" but out of regard to my step-sister,

"Whatever notice the emperor and empress may see fit to bestow upon my daughter will be accepted by the Russian nobility as a compliment to themselves; whereas a favour conceded to the daughter of the representative of one of the lesser powers of Germany, would give universal offence. I explain all this to you, Ida, that you may not misconstrue any preference seemingly accorded to Marguerite. you have too much sense to set undue value on such distinctions.

"Had Mademoiselle Thérèse accompanied us hither, according to my expectations, she would have explained all such matters to you more circumstantially than the little leisure I can enjoy at St. Petersburg

enables me to do.

"However, I see that you understand me, and will be good and prudent. Like other and greater politicians, we must reculer pour mieux sauter; and, perhaps, when all the intriguers about the court have satisfied themselves that I ground no pretensions as Baron von Rehfeld's wife upon the favour enjoyed as widow of Count Erloff, I may be permitted to withdraw you from the background, to which, in the beginning, I fear you are condemned."

By a kiss on the forehead, the baroness now dismissed me from an audience which seemed intended as a prelude to my disenchantments. For lo, as if at the command of some adverse genius in a fairy-tale, a hedge of thorn seemed to have suddenly started out of the ground, to conceal the bright palace of pleasure on which my eyes had so long been fixed with delight and expectation!

The following day, my attention having been thus startled to the task of observation, I was surprised to find a thousand petty vexations upspringing at every turn. No more free discussions-no lively sallies, as at Rehfeld! Every gay allusion seemed interdicted—every opinion subjected to rule. If I may form inferences from the reiterated cautions of the baroness, the domestic servants here must be a legion of spies. You can imagine nothing more servile than the state of caution to which even Marguerite and myself are subjected in this respect.

It is not alone that I am required, on receiving a buffet on the cheek from the insolence of Muscovite barbarism, to turn the other with a request for a repetition of the favour, but I am positively interdicted the expression of a single free opinion; and Marguerite assures me that in the higher circles of St. Petersburg, it is a matter of bon ton to have no opinion on any subject more open to political interpretation

than the weather.

Already, I am beginning to find my language confused, and my ideas contracting, chère bonne, under the influence of this wretched depression. In Germany, I used to consider Nicholas I. a human being, or at most, an emperor. Here, he has suddenly expanded, in my mind, into a mysterious influence—a supernatural intelligence—an all but supreme being. But alas! it is forbidden, even in my letters, to talk of this! Adieu, then, for the present. My next shall treat of safer subjects. I will try to describe the magnificent palaces of St. Petersburg—if indeed it be permissible to allude to so much as the plumage of this imperial cagle whose beak and claws are so redoubtable.—Adieu!

## Letter VI.-From the Baron von Rehfeld to Wilhelm von Rehfeld.

I PROMISED you, my dear nephew, that on my arrival at Petersburg I would reply to the request you urged at the Residenz, that I should solicit of the grand duke your appointment as attaché to the Legation, in the event of receiving your mother's sanction to spending the winter in Russia.

On mature consideration, I find that this would be more difficult of accomplishment than I surmised. A single attaché is allowed me; and it would be as impossible for me to supersede the services of young Hohenthal, as to dismiss August von Collin, who, from the period of

my own appointment, has officiated as my private secretary.

Under these circumstances I should recommend you to suspend, for the present, your projected tour. The court of St. Petersburg is unlike all other European courts. A sufficient motive seems to be demanded from all those who present themselves as mere travellers, yet prolong their sojourn beyond the usual limits of curiosity. Amateur tourists cannot sojourn here, as in Italy, for the benefit of the climate,—as in Paris, for social enjoyment,—or as in London, for the study of its institutions or the improvement of their stables. Should you, as you desire, attempt a prolonged residence in St. Petersburg, it would be imagined either that your marriage with my daughter was on the eve of accomplishment, or that you had some other inostensible inducement.

As regards the former plea, you seem fully to coincide in my opinion that it is desirable for Ida, as well as yourself, to have seen something of the world previous to any ratification of our vague projects on the

subject.

In a word, my dear Wilhelm, I advise you to postpone your journey hither. Our friend, Grünglatz, has written to me, proposing a visit to this capital. But I am equally of opinion that he would find it more advantageous to examine St. Petersburg during the summer season; when the public collections will be more accessible, and his practical pursuits as a naturalist obtain happier facilities. Tell him, therefore, with a thousand compliments from myself and my familiy, that I cannot recommend so long a journey to either of you, at this inclement season.

Nothing, on the other hand, can be more charming than a Russian summer, which may be regarded as a long day—the darkest night

scarcely exceeding the twilight of other countries. The Neva, which, with its endless varieties of shipping, constitutes the boast of the city, is then in its glory, imparting to St. Petersburg the air of a modernized Venice; but the beautiful villas on its banks, the rich galleys, the populous quays, are lost, as objects of attraction, during the continuance of the frost.

In May, therefore, previous to our departure for the seat of the baroness in the environs of Tzarsko-çélo, I shall hope to see you. Meantime, it will afford me sincere pleasure to hear of your welfare.

Meantime, it will afford me sincere pleasure to hear of your welfare. Present the compliments of the New Year in my name and that of my family, to your excellent mother; and on no account omit the transmission of my message to my friend Grünglatz.

### Letter VII.-From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to Count Jules.

How often, my dear brother, have we exploded with rage on perusing together, in the tedious work of some foreign traveller, impertinences

levelled at our national manners, habits, and opinions.

Our indignation was a proof, only, of the circumscription of our experience. The further I travel, the more I become disgusted with objects and usages that impose themselves upon the world under the name of French. When I reflect upon the loathsome dinners palmed on me in St. Petersburg as dressed by the "famous French cook," of Prince Astrapouschapovitch, or the half-denuded women, glowing with paint, pointed out to me as charming, because attired à la Française and receiving their dresses from Paris, I cannot wonder at the disapproval expressed by foreigners less versed than myself in the truth of such matters.

The Frenchness of St. Petersburg is, at best, the Frenchness of a century ago. All the sins of which we have repented and all the fripery we have rejected, appear to have been transferred to this place. In our time, rouge and pearl powder have been confined to the stage. In our time, dinners have been prepared for the palate, and not for the eye. Decorated dishes and faded faces, scarcity of drapery and bold flirtation, are, heaven be thanked, as utterly unknown in our society, as

they ought to be throughout the civilized confederacy.

How can one wonder, therefore, that Nicholas should entertain anti-Gallican prejudices, or that he should cherish a pleasanter impressor of England, which he visited en prince, and has studied en philosophe? For my part, I freely forgive him. I should myself abhor a France, jeune ou ancienne, such as the one of which he obtains specimens. Few among the persons worth knowing among us are rich enough to travel; whereas, year after year, the English yachts and steamers are wafting knights of the garter and lovely marchionesses over the Baltic, to show his Imperial Majesty that the land which he admired so much "when George III. was king," and Nicholas a cadet de famille (which, even when the family is imperial, is no such mighty affair), has lost nothing of its good sense and dignified pragmaticality, under three succeeding reigns.

It is too much to expect of a hyperborean understanding, to comprehend that, howbeit, the revolutionists of '89 have left successors in Napoleonized and re-Bourbonized France, fully capable of engendering

a second revolution—a revolution of mere opinion, the ancien régime was not so thoroughly extinguished as not to have legitimate successors, as distinct [from the rest as the blue waters of the Rhone from the lake they traverse. However, if the ignorance of the Muscovites render them unindulgent towards me, MY pity of their ignorance, renders me indulgent towards them; and I consequently accept their antipathy to the French as directed exclusively against a race of people as odious to me as to themselves.

Du reste, regarding, as I do, the nobler order of the ladies of Russia, more especially Russianized Poland, as the representatives of the Versailles of Louis XV., I admit that, except as models of superficial taste, they are charming creatures. Impossible to imagine anything more diverting! Such over-acted vivacity—such prodigious migraines—such spasmodic maux de nerfs! One fancies the days of the Parabère, the Du Prie—nay, even the Dubarri, come again; though, by the way, I have heard that the latter was so admirably schooled by our cousin of Brissac, as to have been mistakable in her latter days for as high-bred gentlewoman as the rest.

I am, perhaps, hasty in pronouncing sentence on the lovely Muscovites, for I can judge only of those who have received me into their houses with open arms; while the more courtly set are difficult of access to foreigners, even to those who present themselves with the letters of introduction which I have not been at the trouble to procure.

My pretty Ida, by the way, is already detested by these women; which I take to be a guarantee of her perfect succès in general society. I have seen less of her than I expected; less perhaps than I intended. But in a new society, one is obliged to be assiduous in certain ceremonies of politeness, such as one afterwards permits oneself to neglect; and I have accordingly massacred myself with the formality of returning visits and accepting invitations, which henceforward may look for my services in vain.

It is perhaps because resentful of my neglect, that the flaxen idol of my soul looks somewhat cold upon the devotions I am beginning to renew. In her father's old barn of a château she was uniformly lovely and aimable. Here, with a thousand incentives to mirth (for we are surrounded by the quizzible in all its branches), the poor girl appears miserably out of spirits. The baroness whispers to me that this arises from wounded self-consequence, that the Lily of Rehfeld expected to be the Lily of St. Petersburg, and that the notice bestowed upon her by the little show-box puppet-court of the Residenz had induced her to anticipate a flourish of trumpets in her honour in presence of all the Russias.

Poor child! How much have people to answer for who rear their children in such seclusion and ignorance of the world, as to cultivate their egotism into this giant growth! I must take her in hand again; though, perhaps, too much notice on my part might encourage rather

than check the progress of the evil.

It might be more to Mademoiselle von Rehfeld's advantage, were I to devote some attention for a time to poor Marguerite, whose attractions she is apt to undervalue; and who, but that a portionless cousin is an unsafe object of civility, is really a charming creature; uniform in temper, gentle in deportment, obliging in character, all that might be expected from the  $\ell\ell\ell ve$  of our charming old aunt; by which I mean, according to ker notions of education, a girl brought up in conventual subjection, with whom the countess never exchanged a dozen sentences

during the dozen years she was committed to her charge. Marguerite Erloff will consequently make a pattern for wives. Were she rich, in addition to her personal merits, I would recommend her, my dear Jules, to you; from which hint, be pleased to infer that, with all my volatility and inconsequence, I have not yet renounced the antimatrimonal principles becoming a younger brother.

Do not repeat a syllable of this to our dear aunt, or I should be having her despatch a volume of warnings and remonstrances to Madame von Rehfeld assuring her I am in love with her daughter, -an

amiable weakness of which, believe me, I am incapable.

Farewell, my dear Jules. News, news, news, I beseech you! Ovid in exile among the Goths implores you for an authentic word or two touching those important matters in which gazetteers are not to be trusted. Give me scandal and the opera,—anything you please but politics! I only wish I had scandal and opera here, to furnish me with subjects for my correspondence in return. A tous les Dieux.

#### Letter VIII. - From Marguerite Erloff to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

THOUGH apprehensive of exciting your uneasiness, dear Mademoiselle Thérèse. I cannot but risk an inquiry relative to our dear Ida, which you alone can answer. Have I displeased her, or are her reserve and low spirits attributable only to absence from her home and country? It is natural, I admit, that, separated from you, her friend, as well as from her good Sara, her poor heart should droop. Still, she anticipated so much delight from her expedition to Russia, and even throughout our journey was so elated, that I cannot but ascribe her sudden depression either to illness or some just cause of displeasure. Illness, however, it cannot surely be, for never did I see her more

blooming; nor can you well imagine the admiration and envy excited among our pallid beauties of St. Petersburg by Ida's radiant complexion.

To mamma I dare not even suggest the origin of my uneasiness, lest she should imagine my step-sister discontented with the efforts made to please her; while as to the baron, I stand so much in awe of him, as never yet to have hazarded an attempt at familiar conversation.

My cousin Alfred, who is not enamoured of Russia in any point of view, assures me that Ida's dulness is the result of our abominable climate; and that, by noticing her ennui, I shall only augment the evil. I have, therefore, renounced every attempt at condolence; and presume to apply to yourself to know whether I have been so unfortunate as to offend her, or whether you can suggest any means by which I might cheer or enliven the life I would fain render happiest of the happy.

I am the more mortified at witnessing her melancholy, because, for my own part, I have not a wish ungratified. My brother will be here in a few weeks; and our little home circle, to which the company of dearest Ida and my cousin Alfred have imparted a charm that renders me indifferent to the gay circles in which we are beginning to take our share, is to be increased to-morrow by the arrival of Prince Gallitzin, who, as one of the friends of my late father, is on the most intimate footing at our house. I need not enlarge upon his merit; for he used to be a great favourite of yours at Schloss Rehfeld.

By the way, it may amuse you to learn that already Ida has an

admirer;—at least we can assign no other motive than admiration of my step-sister to the half-sullen pertinacity with which a certain English milord, named Elvinston, constantly renews his visits, though apparently tortured by every effort we make to lead him into conversation. He was first presented by my cousin Alfred, who, through the introduction of the French Embassy, is well acquainted with the English attachés; and comes here once or twice a week to sit on the edge of his chair, blush scarlet at every word addressed to him by my mother, and at the end of an hour scramble out of the room, after an attempt to take leave much as if he had been committing a crime instead of fulfilling a ceremony.

Count Alfred declares that Lord Elvinston is an excellent fellow and a man of sense, who has acquired the air of a blockhead from never having learned to dance. But Ida, after one or two attempts to amuse herself by laughing at him, tells me she has given him up, as game too tame to be worth running down; and he is consequently left for me to entertain,—a duty which I execute by allowing him to notice my efforts by vague replies, while his eyes remain steadily fixed upon Mademoiselle

von Rehfeld.

My dear sister seems surprised to find the little consequence assigned here to unmarried girls,—a thing my Paris education had, of course, prepared me to expect. In Germany, unless at the larger courts, it seems a certain domesticity of manners and habits converts society into an extended family circle; and poor girls are not exempted as with you and us from the tedious ceremonial of life till qualified by their marriage to take part in the pageant. Perhaps this system, which conveys at first an appearance of personal slight, may have some share in depressing the spirits of my sister. Yet, surely, she ought rather to rejoice that for a time we are free from the labour of representation, which she constantly hears my mother declare to be the most cruel corvée in the world.

For my own share, I know there never passes a day in which I do not bless my stars for having escaped the misfortune at one moment anticipated by mamma, of my appointment as maid of honour to the empress. Though this constitutes a mere grade of honour, and the number of them sometimes amounts to eighty, I trembled at the idea of the representation it would entail upon me; nor shall I ever forget the agony of my presentation to the emperor, though a private one, to return thanks for the continuance of our pension, re-accorded on my mother's marriage, previous to our departure for Germany. Though the emperor is strikingly handsome, there is something stern and imposing in his air, which caused my blood to curdle. As to the empress—but I seem to forget that this is to me an interdicted subject.

We are all going to-night to a ball given by your rich and stately ambassador, the Duc de Mortémart; and my cousin Alfred keeps assuring Ida that, at length, she is sure of a *fête* deserving the name. We have beautiful new dresses for the occasion, and it is to be one of the triumphs of the Carnival. Ida will give you an account of its splendours, which, I trust, may fully realize my cousin Alfred's prediction.

Farewell, dear friend. Do not, I entreat, forget to reply fully and

candidly to my rash interrogations.

Letter IX.—From Viscount Elvinston to Sir Henry Maitland, Bart., London.

You complain, my dear sir, that my letters have given you a less explicit account of my pursuits in Petersburg, than those I addressed to you from Stockholm of my occupations in Sweden. Believe me, this is unintentional. The week following my arrival here, the winter season set in. The freezing of the Neva gives the signal for the cessation of all out-of-door pleasures; and to waste time so precious as yours in empty details of fêtes and entertainments is a liberty I should not have attempted, but that your letters seem to accuse me of either laziness or

reserve.

I must, therefore, afford you, by my wretched attempts at description, a less accurate account of this place than you have derived from better authorities; more particularly from the account given us by George Maitland, who, having visited St. Petersburg in the summer season, amused us with a more flattering picture of its beauties and splendours than I am able to confirm. Most cities are more advantageously viewed in summer, by such travellers as prefer the aspect of nature and of a new people, to courtly pageantry, which I suppose is pretty nearly the same in all civilized countries. But St. Petersburg above all;—so much of its local attraction being derived from the noble river, which affords greater varieties of waterscape than our own Thames, the Bay of Naples, and Lagunes of Venice, united; and which, throughout the winter months, is reduced to the cheeriess aspect of a snowy plain. The very palaces on the quays, which in some places present a fine architectural façade, nearly a mile in extent, forfeit half their grandeur

when deprived of this vivifying foreground.

To an eye accustomed to the metropolitan vivacity of London or Paris, St. Petersburg presents the appearance of the outline of a great city, still waiting to be filled up; and the name of "Palmyra of the North," sometimes conceded to this place, would, in my opinion, be aptly exchanged for that of Washington the Great. Proportioned in design rather to the magnitude of the empire whereof it forms the seat of government, than to the wants of the population, it extends, as you have probably heard, so far beyond the demands of its half-million of inhabitants, as to apportion at the rate of twelve hundred square feet to every man, woman, and child within its limits. This prodigality of space, considering the nature and cost of a purely artificial soil, raised on piles in the delta of the Neva as that of Venice on the Lagoon, appears a singular oversight. Centuries will scarcely suffice to complete the city so boldly sketched, a century ago, by Peter the Great, on the extreme edge of an empire of which his martial successors have since so mightily extended the frontier. It will be some time, I suspect, before the Swedes again take the Muscovite by the beard within reach of the citadel of his capital, as was the case when Peter was constructing his superfluous metropolis.

Were I personally interested in the prosperity of the place, it would afford me, I own, endless vexation, that the said great founder should not have selected a more prosperous site than a swamp, where the foundations of every house cost as much as the superstructure; and where the prevalence of a westerly wind, at the moment of the breaking up of the winter frost, would inevitably produce an inundation,

capable of sweeping the city from its precarious footing. This great capital, which rose as it were with the growth of Jonah's gourd, is

equally susceptible of being as rapidly cut down and withered.

In the meanwhile, even while solid and prosperous as her subterranean forest of piles will admit, the flatness of the site is fatal to picturesque effect. In spite of the grandeur of the public buildings, nothing can be more monotonous than the winter aspect of the city. From the prodigality of space, the houses appear low in proportion to their extent, exhibiting half the number of stories usual in Paris or Vienna; while a certain haziness of atmosphere deprives the long perspective of the streets of everything like dignity or grandeur. It sounds well in foreign countries, that the equipages of people of condition never appear in the streets of St. Petersburg without four horses. But in this straggling city, in streets half lighted by night, and by day presenting only a dingy waste of beaten snow, these equipages produce not half the effect of a well-appointed London chariot and pair.

Pedestrian pleasures, on the other hand, are out of the question. The severity of the weather at this season renders them as much a matter of danger, as the laws of bon ton a matter of indecorum. The emperor is the only man bold enough to defy both. Our English nursery Christmas proverb, "If you go out, Jack Frost will lay hold of your nose," is here no fiction; and as the sufferer is himself often erndered unconscious by the general numbness of his features when exposed to the atmosphere, of the misfortune that has befallen him, it is not uncommon to be stopped by a stranger in the street, and quietly informed that your nose is frozen; an evil which you must remedy by rubbing it with snow ere it be too late. You will readily believe, therefore, that I, who account myself so good a walker, have renounced my pedestrian pleasures till a more convenient season; though Nicholas, acclimatized by nature and second nature, appears constantly on the parade in uniform, without a pelisse or cloak, as well as on foot and in

an open sledge in the public promenades.

You have heard George Maitland assign a decided preference to that grand thoroughfare of St. Petersburg, the Nevskoï Prospekt, over our Regent Street; and the Admiralty quay here, to that of the Louvre. I know not how this may be in the summer season, when one can take leisure to enjoy the gay aspect of the shops, and the wooden pavement is disencumbered of its dull snow or filthy subsequent mud, while the Neva ripples gaily in its channel, crowded with an endless variety of craft. But at present, I must confess, I give the preference to streets where one pauses, if the expression may be allowed, without the fear of losing one's nose before one's eyes; and to a city where one is not dependent for transit upon the precarious aid of bridges of boats, which, at certain epochs of the year, in consequence of the freezing or thawing of the river, are of necessity constructed and re-constructed several times in the course of the day; and at others, are for days together wholly wanting. It is said that the money spent in making and unmaking the Izaak's Bridge, would have sufficed to form one of stone as fine as that of Waterloo.

I will not trouble you with a further description for the present. All I have to tell of the really palatial palaces of the Czar, may keep for some future occasion; for you will be anxious for a reply to your inquiries concerning the society with which I chiefly pass my time.

You have often suggested to me, my dear sir, that in foreign countries, the diplomatic society is likely to prove the most advantageous;

as concentrating all that is distinguished by birth, breeding, or ability, of the united Europe. That it is the most amusing, I fully grant; though one should gain, I fear, but an imperfect insight into the society of a country, more especially such a country as this, by taking, as a fair sample, the Russian ambassadors in foreign countries, or associating

here only with this privileged class of foreigners.

But since my object in spending a portion of the winter here, is not to write a book upon the present state of Russia, or even to form a severely accurate notion of its resources and progress for the embellishment of some future speech in parliament, but simply to enjoy a somewhat less turbulent carnival than at Paris last year, and a less costly season than the preceding winter at Melton, for which you, my dear guardian, have sentenced me to a year's prudence and penitence. I have permitted myself, under your sanction, to enjoy all the pleasures derivable from the hospitalities of the Duc de Mortémart and the other foreign ministers, for whom you were so obliging as to forward me letters of recommendation.

The duke more especially, has one of the pleasantest houses in St. Petersburg. But there, as in our own embassy, there are no companions of my own age, except the attachés, who are absorbed in their own pursuits; whereas in one or two others of a less brilliant nature, I find young people inclined to be sociable, in alternation with the graver

associates you advise me to cultivate.

Among these, the family of the — minister, possesses peculiar attractions for me; as the daughter of Madame von Rehfeld, by her former marriage with a Russian general, speaks English like a native. The aptitude of the Russians for the acquirement of foreign languages has been too often cited to need my testimony; but since my domestication here, I have been less surprised at the fluency with which, in other countries, I have found them speaking the idiom of the place. From their infancy, this is made an especial object of education. same spirit which induced Peter to bring boat-builders from Holland, and Catherine, savans from France, to assist in the organization of their new empire, has suggested to their subjects the wisdom of promoting national intercourse with more polished nations, by the cultivation of foreign languages; and English nursery-maids, French governesses, and German tutors, are to be found in every Russian family of distinction.

Even in the public institution of the Foundling Hospital (which, as you are aware has here a foundation so opulent, that its revenue would pay the interest of our national debt), promotes this object so strenuously, that the pupils, on quitting the establishment to earn their livelihood, are without exception, versed in three or four modern

languages.

That the daughter of Madame von Rehfeld should be so good an English scholar is the more surprising, because twelve months only have elapsed since her return from Paris, where she resided many years for her education with her maternal relations the Vaudreuils, a family with whom I became well acquainted last year. But I conclude that the early lessons of her English nurse were too deeply implanted on "the soft wax of an infant's memory," to be obliterated even by long sojourn in the anti-Anglican and anti-philological Faubourg St. Germain;—the French being, heaven knows, as remarkable for their incapacity as linguists, as the Russians for a contrary facility.

It is true, the Parisians make a national boast of their exclusive

devotion to their own "perfect and universal language;" and are not a little proud of its having been so long adopted in Russia for purposes of state, and remaining the fashionable dialect for purposes of society. Even the noble monument erected to the memory of his troops, at the close of the late war, by the Emperor Alexander, bears the inscription "à mes braves compagnons d'armes."

Unless I am much mistaken, however, the present emperor will employ the full force of his somewhat arbitrary will, in nationalizing the people, whom his ancestors could only concentrate into a nation by assimilation and sympathy with those of other countries. It is now time to reproduce the elements of a whole, whose amalgamation and

entirety was the first object of its legislators.

With the exception of the Rehfelds, there is scarcely a family with which I am on terms of intimacy; but in their circle, I find an amusing variety; the mother being French, the daughter Russian, the husband and his daughter, German; and by one of the family, at least, my native tongue is spoken in perfection, the greatest attraction, perhaps, of all. In a few weeks, their circle will receive an addition in Count Alexis Erloff, the son of Madame von Rehfeld, an officer in the Izmaeloffsky regiment of guards; who, Mademoiselle Erloff assures me, is a far better English scholar than herself. Young Erloff received his education, I find, at the cost of the emperor, at the Hôtel des Pages, or noble Military College of St. Petersburg.

A circumstance which, were I of Muscovite origin, I should find more mortifying than the popularity of the French tongue, is the undeniable obligation of the "Northern Palmyra," to foreign architects, sculptors, and painters. The magnificent palaces in which the Russians pride themselves, their public institutions, their national foundations, are the works of the French, Italians, Germans, or English. It is true that the results of the system of public education founded by Catherine II., are only now coming into play; pending which their fine churches, and academies, their hospitals, and botanical gardens, their museums and galleries, constitute a debt of gratitude to Western and Northern Europe, which it will require centuries to repay.

I fear, my dear sir, that, instead of renewing your complaint of the brevity of my letters, you will now exclaim against my garrulity. One word from you will be a sufficient check to my communicative vein; but if I do not receive some such warning, I shall probably bore you in my next with a few observations on the domestic life of the city of the Czar.-I have the honour to be, your affectionate ward,

ELVINSTON.

Letter X.-From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to the Countess Auguste, in Paris.

You were quite right, chère tante, in your surmise that the former intermarriage of my cousin with a Russian noble, as well as my intimacy with the Mortémarts would supersede all necessity for letters of introduction. I am now perfectly established here-more so by the way, than your Teutonic son-in-law. The corps diplomatique is less in favour at the imperial court than at any other, I should imagine, unless that of Pekin. The policy of the Russian cabinet, if in reality that of stratagem, is ostensibly that of open defiance. Though probably the most astucious in Europe, their tone of braggartry necessitates singular neglect of the inter-negotiators of their foreign policy; and the ambassadors are frequently omitted from the list of invited to the private fêtes of the court. But this, I suspect, is part of the nationalizing system of Nicholas. In your time, probably, a different order of things may have prevailed, for Alexander affected to be a liberal. The

liberalism of an autocrat of Russia!

In one respect, matters are unchanged: the worthy Muscovites are still the most military of bellicose nations. From the time when Peter the Great founded their city with a sword in one hand and a trowle in the other, and was compelled to institute military rank as a matter of precedency, because chivalric distinctions could not be suddenly summoned out of the waters of the Neva, like frigates or palaces—to be a soldier appears to have been as great a thing in St. Petersburg, as in London to be a lord, or in Paris a gentleman and a man of genius.

I experienced of course, chère tante, a presentiment of general

retardation, moral and physical, on consenting to waste a portion of my days among people who allow their calendar to be burthened by the twelve additional days which Father Time has gradually slung, like mill-stones, round the neck of the year. The obstinacy with which these people adhere to the Gregorian style, compelling all other manufacturers of state papers to brand the Russian Protocols with the infamous letters of O.S., is as disgraceful, in my humble opinion, to a

nation, as those of T. V. to an individual.

But I did not suppose that Muscovite man, in his progress towards civilized man, would have stopped so short by the way, as still to be as much indebted to providence for his resources against the rigour of the climate, as the bears and wolves of his deserts. Oh! the foulness of the unshorn population; oh! those worse than bestial beards, which, when anointed with the green oil of a piroga or reeking with the cabbage soup, the villanous shtshi which forms, I conclude, from my own observations, the daily bread prayed for in the paternosters of the populace, exude a savour beyond that of a southern synagogue in the dog days! There is some pretext, perhaps, for these hirsute propensities in the aborigines of the Don and Wolga. But since the savages pretend to a civilized capital, why not at least respect the nostrils of civilization?

My poor faithful Clément, who hungereth grievously after the

My poor faithful Clément, who hungereth grievously after the restaurants of the Palais Royal or the cuisine of the Hôtel de Vaudreuil, assures me that, at the hay market or Sinnaia Ploshtshod, where the peasants dispose of their frozen flocks and herds, nothing can be more horrific than the brigade of ghastly cattle drawn up in array, life-like, and seeming to mock the spectator with the glare of their glassy eyeballs. When sawn in portions for retail trade, the gamin class qualified as the Tshornoi Narod (or black people), rush in to contend for the saw-dust; and St. Petersburg may thus boast of favouring the children of clay with two other original and peculiar species of dust; i.e. the flesh-dust scrambled for in the market, and the snow-dust that blinds one in the streets.

This domestic revelation of my friend Clément, addresses itself, by the way, to your excellent femme de confiance, who will be right proud at hearing the travellers' wonders of her son, from the lips of his lady. Tell her also from me, that his master is as eager as himself to behold once more one of the bright wood fires, and vintage nearly as bright, of our beloved Burgundy. What possible excuse, dearest aunt, have we

French, for ever setting foot out of our own glorious country?

You are eager for an account of your grandson, whom you have not seen, I find, since he was as high as the table on which I am writing. Alexis is not yet here; but I have heard him well spoken of among the Benkendorfs, Narischkins, Nesselrodes, Strogonoffs, and others whose praise is distinction. Madame von Rehfeld appears to regret that he should be so essentially Russian as scarcely to appear of your race; but let her restrict her prejudices to our fair and gentle Marguerite. "Soyons de notre pays," is an axiom for men, all over the world. Those who wish Alexis Erloff to prosper in life—that is in Russia, where his life is to pass—must suffer him to forget the Vaudreuil blood intermingling in his veins, in order that others may become equally oblivious. The time is past for foreigners to prosper here. The national mind is throwing off its leading strings; and even another Alexander, of whom, St. Izaak be praised, I see no prospect—would scarcely secure toleration for another Capo d'Istrias. Let Alexis, therefore, be Russian to his finger tips, or rather to his boot tips; for his vocation, I find, is essentially military. May he turn out another Souvaroff or Kutusoff, or anything else most off or skoi in the Russian Empire!

For Marguerite, I find, happy destinies are preparing. Madame von Rehfeld seems assured of her marriage with Sergius Gallitzin; a man of considerable merit, some influence, and mature age. You may still chance to see her established as ambassadress in that charming hotel of the Champs Elysées, where Grimrod de la Reynière wrote and ate, and where Pozzo writes and causes others to eat, so much more exquisitely

than any other scribbler of protocols or giver of dinners.

Gallitzin has lately arrived from Vienna; where it is supposed he was sent on a secret mission, taking Rehfeld by the way, as a pretext for his expedition into Germany. I know not whether we do too much or too little honour to the Muscovite cabinet; but I have noticed that we never allow Nesselrode to sneeze, without feeling convinced that a correspondent sneeze telegraphs his good understanding with Metternich. These twain form, as it were, the two closing links of the iron chain of European monarchy. The day they cease to sneeze in unison.

legitimacy will have to rue!

Meanwhile, whatever may have been Gallitzin's motives for playing billiards and slaying wild boar a dull fortnight at Rehfeld, it is generally considered that there is a tenderer origin for his daily visits to the Hotel of the \*\* Legation'" (if you could only hear the mouthful our good baron makes of it! the Constantinopolitanische Dudelsacks Pfeisser wherewith my old German master, Klinkerfus, used to dislocate my jaws by way of exercise, was slight by comparison!). But I leave it to the dear baroness to explain her maternal policy; trusting it may find as much sympathy, belle tante, in the Hôtel de Vaudreuil, as exists in the telegraphic sneezes of the privy councils of the Danube and Neva.

### Letter XI.-From Ida von Rehfeld to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

You have had a relapse, then, chère bonne? How could you be so incautious as trust yourself to the arm of the worthy pastor, whose guidance in the ways of this world is, alas! so much less to be relied on than in the paths of peace? Had I known beforehand of your inten-

tion to quit your chamber, I should have warned you against the aid

of so inefficient a cavalier.

Very often do I wish that it was my arm you had to lean upon, and that my father had left me behind at Schloss Rehfeld, as in the former instance! Travel in a foreign country, on an independent footing, may be a charming thing; but a compulsory sojourn among strangers, be your distastes what they may, invalidates all the attraction one might otherwise find in the novelty of the scene. A diplomatic situation, high or low, is always slavery; splendid slavery, if high,-petty slavery, My father's, alas, is only a petty one; a very diminutive appanage to the triumphal car of Muscovite domination; and, of necessity, I am but a shred of his garment. Far better, chère bonne, be one's own mistress at home! Rather sink under the leaden weight of ennui than be pricked to death with pins' points, -pins' points, moreover, of brass or copper, not of precious metal! I am almost beginning to understand the charm that Marguerite Erloff discerned in Schloss Rehfeld. It was, at least, independence as regards choice of time and place.

Frank as I was with you concerning my rash desire for change, let me be equally candid in avowing my remorse. I was wrong to extend my desire beyond my native Germany. At Rehfeld, even at the Residenz, I had a definite position. Here, I am an, equivocal nothing, who must not aspire to become something, lest somebody should take offence. When we read together in the old library at Rehfeld portions of the memoirs of De Retz and Madame de Motteville, St. Simon, or Dangeau, so indistinct were my notions of the nature of courtiership that the books you had announced to me as so entertaining, failed to amuse me. Now, I am beginning to understand and dread this epidemy of palaces! I could laugh now, with Madame de Motteville,—or at her,—or rather weep; for what more deserving pity than such miserable

self-abasement?

I can scarcely describe to you, chère bonne, the singular effect produced in my feelings by perceiving the baroness, so frank and free at Rehfeld, become suddenly paralyzed on setting foot in St. Petersburg. I protest to you, that on crossing the frontier, her very faculties were cramped and arrested, as if frost-bitten, and, to a degree far beyond the remedy of rubbing her mind with snow, by way of restorative.

remedy of rubbing her mind with snow, by way of restorative.

Nor is she the only example. Since I began to exercise my newfound powers of observation, I have noticed people with thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands of serfs nearly as much at their disposal as their hares and rabbits; people who eat on gold, and walk on lapis lazuli,—people who, when they want to change the furniture of their palaces, send to Italy, and buy a gallery of chefs-d'œuvre, or to the royal Gobelins for their hangings. I have seen these magnificos cringe and crouch under the influence of an imperial frown! Under such circumstances, I do not wonder it should have been found necessary to compel the rich Russians to reside in their native country, by confiscating their estates after more than five years' absenteeism. Nothing short of the penalty of destitution would compel me to abide in a city where an isvoshtshik on his hackney coach-stand is as much his own master as a noble in his palace; and where the butshnik in the street exercises no severer police over vagrants than one chamberlain over another.

Count Alfred de Vaudreuil assured me the other night, as we were standing together at the ball of the Duc de Mortémart (and it is not everywhere, or with every one, conversation on such a subject would be safe), that scarcely a Russian of high fortune or degree, permitted to reside at any foreign court, but earns his license dearly as regards his feelings and conscience by a correspondence with home, rendering him little short of a spy upon the nakedness of the land in which he is accepting hospitality. Is not this revolting? Is not this a cruel counterbalance to the noble system of the imperial government of entertaining an ex-political mission in the great cities of Europe, for the study of their institutions, arts, sciences, literature, and manufactures, which has always appeared to me the sublime of legislative munificence.

But I am talking to you of Russia, chère bonne, when you assure me that you wish me to talk only of myself. Yet how treat of myself, my prospects, my interests, my happiness, without affording you some insight into the habits of those among whom I live, and habits so uncon-

genial with our own?

Our little circle has derived an addition from the return of Prince Gallitzin, who is scarcely less familiar among us here than when domesticated at Schloss Rehfeld. I am almost ashamed to own to you that, on meeting him again, I found my ideas of his merits singularly developed by hearing him constantly alluded to in St. Petersburg as "a favourite of the emperor." On his arrival in Germany, I regarded him as a cold old man, of more than my father's years, a person in whom it was impossible for me to feel the slightest interest. Here, I detect myself listening eagerly to every word that falls from his lips, as

though affording indications of imperial will or caprice!

Not that many fall from his lips! The prince is habitually taciturn; and I am convinced that he and my father might spend a month tête-à-tête, without the effusion of a phrase a week, between the two. It is, therefore, the more singular to me that he can endure, as he does, nay, take pleasure as he does, in the society of Count Alfred, whom he is pretty sure to find here, and who is the only person into whom the atmosphere of St. Petersburg has infused no caution. Monsieur de Vaudreuil rattles on as wildly here as he did at Rehfeld. It may be on that very account Prince Gallitzin likes his company, being sure to hear from him opinions floating in society, which native Russians would bite their tongues off, rather than hazard in presence of an imperial favourite.

Perhaps, however, I am mistaken; for it is only natural the prince should frequent my father's house, considering the matrimonial projects

of the baroness for Marguerite.

Chère bonne, you have heard, it seems, of my strange conquest! Marguerite tells me her letters have introduced Lord Elvinston to your acquaintance; a man who looks as if he had been taken to pieces and put together by an unskilful workman, so little do his limbs seem to belong to his body, or his features to his face. Never did one see so awkward a being, or one so tortured by mauvaise honte! With birth, fortune, and information to recommend him in society, he has the air of a malefactor. I am not sure, however, that I do not prefer his left-handedness and left-leggedness to the self-possessed provinciality of my cousin Wilhelm, who is not so much as sensible of his own manifold deficiencies.

There are a few other Englishmen in society here,—one or two attached to their embassy; but only this solitary *I-say-kee* by way of traveller. They usually invade these northern latitudes in the summer season, which in St. Petersburg is said to constitute a single day, and

lovely, in proportion to its brevity,—the flowers never losing their dis-

tinctness of colour, nor the birds retiring to roost.

There are many English merchants, I fancy, settled here. But the line of demarcation between commerce and arms (which in Russia almost constitute nobility) is far more positive than in our country or their own. They live apart, and, I am told, splendidly,—secure probably from the vexations that embitter a state of society more fluctuating and less definite.

You will perceive, chère bonne, that I am beginning to contemplate such matters with a more scrutinizing eye than of old. Previous to my arrival here, with an adviser at once so kind and so wise as yourself ever at hand, I had taken things too much for granted, and saw them as I wished to see them, not as they were. I was persuaded, for instance, that my prospects in Russia were all sunshine; and the shock of my disappointment has been proportionally severe. It was not, however, on that point I intended to enlarge. I wish only to reassure you touching my discretion for the future, and convince you that I have at length made my own the precept you used to inculcate, of the necessity of surmounting in the consideration of worldly interests,—"de prendre sa position entre ses deux mains," as you used to say, and contemplate it with the eves of the stranger.

After all, therefore, my momentary shock may prove as serious a benefit to my moral health as a plunge into a cold bath is said to afford an enfeebled constitution,—that is, provided it prove not fatal. I have ceased to act as if living only from hour to hour, as one does under the happy impulses of youth, and feel accountable to myself for my

happiness as to heaven for my conduct.

After this grave axiom,—not of morality perhaps, but policy (and, oh! that at eighteen I should have experienced sufficiently bitter moments to have betaken myself to policy!),—it may seem a wild transition to talk of Count Alfred. But as I open my heart to you to its innermost core, it would be less than frank to conceal from you how amused I felt on discovering, at the ball of the French embassy, the truth of your frequent assurances, that in his own country, or among his own country people, Monsieur de Vaudreuil would not dream of devoting to Marguerite, myself, or any other girl, the attentions into which he permitted himself to derogate among the forests of Rehfeld.

Impossible for even my wild imagination to conceive anything more splendid than the ball of the Duc de Mortémart! Do not exclaim against my inexperience as the origin of my admiration; for know that, two nights before, we were present at an imperial fête—a fête of all others the most select and inaccessible—given at the Anitschkoff Palace; a splendid mansion, occupied by Nicholas when grand duke, on the Fontanka Quay, which the imperial family regard as a private residence, and to which they retire whenever they wish to shake off the

pomps of state.

You will readily conceive that the privacy of an emperor of Russia is far more gorgeous than the utmost attempts at magnificence of other sovereigns; and though the private fêtes at the Anitschkoff affect simplicity, it is that terrible simplicity of recherche, so much more costly than gaudy show. It is whispered that in the intimacy of his family circle, his imperial majesty has been heard to call the empress "Madame Nicholas," and address his pretty grand-duchesses by the name of "dushinka," or some other of the Russian diminutives of fondness. But nothing can be more embarrassing than a circle so

scanty as to expose every individual severally to the scrutiny of the empress, who has all the taste for dress of an élégante of the Chaussée d'Antin, and all the power of enforcing the same fastidiousness to

others by the glance of an eye not naturally beneficent.

Not a single member of the corps diplomatique received an invitation to this ball; and our presence there was a distinction conceded to the favour enjoyed by the Erloff family. This was so distinctly implied. as to mark for the future, not only to ourselves, but to the tribe of Wollkonskys, Orloffs, Potockis, Czernicheffs, Dashkoffs, Strogonoffs, Witgensteins, Woronzoffs, Modenas, and Nesselrodes, constituting the court, of the footing on which we were hereafter to stand among them. No person admitted to the private balls of the empress, at the Anitschkoff, is susceptible of being exposed to slight.

Had this distinction, therefore, awaited us on the day succeeding my arrival here, before I beheld St. Petersburg in its true light, how elated should I have been! At all events, though as regarded the pride of Ida von Rehfeld, I arrayed myself in the beautiful ball-dress provided

for me by the renowned Madame Hugon, with a heavy or rather irritated heart, I expected that my eyes would be as much dazzled as my soul would remain blank and spiritless. But it was not so! this imperial soirce, the efforts made to appear at ease served only to increase the gene of the affair. Nothing can be more formal than the privacy of imperial life, which I had heard so loudly praised for its simplicity. The empress is passionately fond of dancing, and accounted one of the best dancers in Europe. It was to accommodate an imputed infirmity of her gait that the galoppe was invented for her at Berlin, when still only a princess of Prussia. But for my own part, I had rather she were less a portion of the company; which, consisting of the élite of the court, in the perpetual habit of inter-association, has of course little interest in or for a mere foreigner like myself—at best, an interloper.

Between ourselves, strictly between ourselves, chère bonne, I must admit to you, that something in the countenance of the empress is sovereignly displeasing to me; though I had fancied her almost pretty when I saw her in the morning, accompanied by her charming little girls. Although my countrywoman, I feel less interest in her than in one or two beautiful natives; such, for instance, as the Countess Zavadoska, who has the loveliest countenance I ever saw, and one of the maids of honour, Mademoiselle Yatsoff, the sweetest creature you can imagine. The affability of the empress appears to me studied. Her countenance, naturally harsh, implies, at once, sternness and frivolity. Merit, however, she must possess; or she would not be beloved by a man of such discernment as Nicholas, on whose commanding person and most imperial presence, I never gaze without feeling that I would fain have been the empress of such an emperor.

I am told I must reserve my opinion of the splendour of the Russian palaces till I have witnessed some of the fêtes of the Carnival in the Winter Palace and Hermitage, which constitute almost a single palace. Four of the stately halls therein, the Salle St. George, Salle Blanche, Salle de Marbre, and Salle des Maréchaux, occupy six hundred feet in length, and are decorated with all that marble, gilding, and scagliola can impart of splendour. The Anitschkoff is less sumptuous; though the precious in-laying of foreign woods and marbles, and the exquisite selection of objects of vertû from all countries, would have interested me exceedingly, but for the august presence in which we stood, and the charm of a Mazurk, which I had never before seen attempted with characteristic perfection. The empress is decidedly the most graceful dancer of this I ever saw. Still, the fête was only a specimen of

laborious trifling;—and I quitted it, weary and dispirited.

At the Duc de Mortémart's, on the contrary, I was impressed by an agreeable consciousness, arising from I know not what charm of tone—manner—grace—refinement. Everything was less splendidly, but far more pleasingly arranged. Elegance rather than magnificence was the order of the night; not "gold and barbaric pearl," but flowers in profusion. In short, chère bonne (car il faut en revenir là!), every-

thing was completely French!

It was in just such an order of society that I should have been gratified beyond measure to find myself noticed by Count Alfred de Vaudreuil. At the court ball, Count Stanislas Potocki, the grand chamberlain, a friend of my father, presented to me, as my first partner, the young Prince Gargarin; and had Alfred been there I should have pretended a pre-engagement with him, for the pleasure of exchanging my fashionable partner for one who would have stood there on less advantageous ground than myself. But he was not even invited! At his own embassy, I should have been indeed proud, indeed, happy, to find that he had courage to distinguish me; and draw the attention of his charming countrywomen towards one for whom in private he has affected so much regard.

So far, however, was this from being the case, that I saw through his panic lest my confidence in his good will should render me too familiar, and betray to the fine world of France his regard for the daughter of a Silesian baron—a wretched Fraulein von Rehfeld unworthy mention by the lips polite of the Faubourg St. Germain!

Do not defend him, chère bonne-do not, as your countryman, protest that he is incapable of such meanness:—I tell you, that "j'ai pris ma position à deux mains," and examined it?—I weighed all—I saw through all, and felt-no matter what! But do not be surprised, under

such circumstances, to find me growing wonderfully wise.

Tell me, dearest, how came the good pastor to sanction the absurd lessons of pride instilled into me by my poor Sara? How came you, on arriving at Schloss Rehfeld, and finding me absorbed in such ridiculous pretensions, not to impress upon me that Europe is only a quarter of the globe-Germany only a country of Europe, --province of Germany, and Rehfeld one of the mediocre baronies of that insignificant duchy? Had I been made to understand this at sixteen, I should not have out, at eighteen, so hard of heart and soft of mind; nor buoyed myself out of my depth on empty bladders upon the stream of life, to sink to the bottom the moment I was left alone to the mercy of the current!

But why reproach you when I ought only to reproach myself! How were you to imagine the intensity of pride and ambition inflating the bosom of the simple-looking girl, musing in her muslin frock and silken sash in the old gallery containing the portraits of her ancestors, and deriving from the contemplation a fixed resolve to tower above them

Will you believe, chère bonne, that my vexations here, so far from quelling these aspiring instincts in my soul, seem only to have increased them by opposition—as the constraint imposed upon the bended bow, serves to wing the arrow in its flight. The other day, when my father, urged by I know not what sudden qualm of self-reproof, began to talk

to me, as aforetime, of my cousin Wilhelm, and to insinuate that, in consideration for my unconcealable distaste for St. Petersburg and probable pining after home, he had only to accelerate the projected union betwixt me and his nephew, it was as much as I could do to refrain from bursting into assurances that, so far from desiring to return to Schloss Rehfeld, it would afford me satisfaction to be certain I should never obtain a glimpse of the old turrets again; that I required a higher sphere, a wider field of action; that I could not breathe, that I could not live in such obscurity! But I respected his prejudices, and forebore. Time enough to declare my fixed determination against becoming the wife of Wilhelm von Rehfeld, when he is seriously pro-

posed to me by my father.

There have been moments when, after reflecting upon the insupportableness of a life spent in such utter exile from the joys and refinements of life as Rehfeld, I have felt almost inclined to smile upon our gawky young Englishman, who is said to be miraculously rich, and of a rank entitling him to pretend to the highest honours of the state. These English people have grand seigneurial ideas! They are fond of the pleasures of foreign countries, fond of the pomps of their own. I could bear with him far better than with Wilhelm von Rehfeld. The English ambassadress treated Lord Elvinston, at the Duc de Mortémart's, with marked distinction; and one of the attachés, newly arrived here, to whom the magnificent diamonds of the Narischkin family were pointed out as unique, observed that those of Lord Elvinston's hereditary casket were twice as remarkable. The Count de Vaudreuil has, more than once, obligingly recommended him as an excellent parti, to Marguerite and myself. Yet, alas! when I repeat the same remark, he evinces no further jealousy than when I recur with affection to our good pastor!

But enough, for the present, of these nonsenses. I am looking anxiously for your letter in answer to my former observations. From you I am certain of receiving the truth; and truth arrayed in such becoming garments as to render it always pleasing and acceptable.

Farewell!

# Letter XII .- From Marguerile Erloff to Mademoiselle Moreau.

How drearily, dearest Mademoiselle Thérèse, must your winter be passing; and how often do I think of you with no other companionship than that of the worthy but unsociable Sara, and the echoes of those deserted old galleries, while we are enjoying the brilliant pleasures of our gay carnival! Though I can imagine nothing more charming than Rehfeld, surrounded with those I love, or even solitary, during the summer season when the forests and fields supply endless companionship, even I, young and healthy, should shrink from a lonely winter in that old château. How much more must you feel the isolation: habituated for so many years to cheerful society, and now debarred by illness from enjoying even the pleasures within your reach! I trust you receive the papers we are punctual in forwarding; and that the packet of books despatched by the baron's orders, through the Residenz, a few days ago, will reach you in safety.

I cannot picture to myself Schloss Rehfeld in the dreariness of winter. When we left you, the woods were still arrayed in their autumnal pomp of leaves; and your noble stream still imparted by its vivifying energy, life to the landscape. But now, the frozen river and leafless woods must, I confess, have somewhat diminished the charm of that noble old pile, of which I can never think without reverence. To me, it would still and ever possess a charm indescribable, derived from historical associations and legendary interests. The chamber which Ida would never allow me to occupy, for instance—the chamber with the old carved panelling, which Sara used to call "Lady Bertha's Oratory," and to which one might have attached such bewildering superstitions, but for the existing legend recorded by the old servants of a former Baroness of Rehfeld; after whose decease, during her husband's absence with the army of Gustavus Adolphus, howbeit her wardrobe was distributed to the poor by her death-bed command, and her remains interred in holy ground, she did reappear twice every day, at matins and evensong in her garment as she lived,—kneeling at the foot of the cross of her oratory, the service whereof she had abjured to cleave to those of the Lutheran church.

Do you remember how cold and pale I used to turn, when Ida encouraged the good nurse to recite to us this and similar traditions of the castle; till at length, I trembled to make my way alone in the twilight along the old corridors?—and how dear Ida laughed at my fears, while her cousin Wilhelm suggested that few superstitions but have some holy origin, and that mockery is an instigation of the Evil

One?

But how is it that I am writing of Rehfeld to you, a denizen within its walls, who are wishing for nothing but news of Ida, and assurances

of the love she has conquered, and the happiness she is enjoying.

In the first place, then, know that, lovely as you ever found her at Rehfeld, the style of dress she has adopted since her arrival here, renders her fifty times prettier than ever. Ida has taken it into her whimsical head (and admit that few heads were ever more prone to the caprices of our sex!) to assume in our family circle, the old Russian costume, which even I, a native, have never judged it necessary to wear, except at court. She has a sufficient excuse, indeed, in the becomingness which every one sees and commends; and mamma, though usually rigorous in matters of the toilet, has indulged her fancy so far as to impose it on me also, in order to prevent any air of eccentricity on the part of my sister. I wish, par parenthèse, you could have seen Ida's look of amazement, on learning that at the grand galas at the winter palace light blue, scarlet, and crimson, are interdicted colours to any person not belonging to the imperial household!

Prince Sergius Gallitzin was beyond measure pleased and amused on his arrival, to find metamorphosed into two fair Muscovites, the Parisians of whom he had taken leave at Rehfeld, so short a time ago; and his sister, Princess Prascovia, one of the most charming women in the world, though not altogether satisfied of the propriety of the dress for Ida, on whom it has the air of a fancy costume, tries to persuade me that I ought never to appear in any other. But though Ida, with her fair hair and expressive blue eyes, looks, I assure you, most bewitching in her blue kaftan, and chemisette of plaited cambric—I know not how otherwise to describe it to you,—my poor dark face looks even more

dingy than usual when pretending to my national honours.

How wilful and wayward are such preferences! I, a Russian born, unable to see beauty or find pleasure in our gay villas or stately palaces, am wild after the old Teutonic halls of Germany and their feudal

associations, in preference to our modern mansions, which, however grand or commodious, derive no interest from the lapse of ages or their connection with the history of man; -while Ida, on the contrary, perceives a mystic charm in the quaint old Muscovité costume, which in my eyes, irreverent that I am, shows like a badge of barbarism, by comparison with the elegance of dress that used to refresh my eyes at the Hôtel de Vaudreuil.

To return, however, to Ida. Conceive her, pray, attired à la Russe, fairer than the fairest of belles Boyardes in our home circle. But you must bring her before you, bounding through a mazurk, in the lightest and freshest of Parisian ball-dresses, of white crape trimmed with wild hyacinths, in order to picture her, as when pronounced by the emperor, at the Anitschkoff ball, to be the prettiest débutante of the winter.

In my opinion, the very perceptible increase of her beauty is derived less from the becomingness of her Russian costume, or the elegance of her French one, than from the air of half-pensive, half-startled timidity, she has acquired in this world of strangers. At Rehfeld—so worshipped -so watched-so waited on-she was surer of herself and others; she had always leisure to be gay, often leisure to be satirical. But at St. Petersburg, even when surrounded by admirers, a certain air of gravity tempers her natural grace. In short, she is charming, and everybody as willing to acknowledge it as you or I.

Your last letter, chère Mademoiselle Thérèse, re-assured me concerning the origin of her sadness on first arriving here. But even before I received your representations of the natural regret of a young person for the friends, scenes, and language of her youth, I was comforted. began to see that I had mistaken gravity for sadness. Ida appears five years older since she quitted Rehfeld; but I do not conceive her to be Princess Prascovia Gallitzin, sister of Prince Sergius, who, being slightly deformed has never married though a very superior woman, sits in wonderment at the brilliant talents and universal information of your pupil, though afraid to engage her in conversation.

I am assured by all those on a sufficiently intimate footing to discuss the matter, that Baron von Rehfeld stands high in the emperor's good opinion; notwithstanding which distinction his freedom from all pretension commands universal respect. I am indeed fortunate that my mother should have formed a second marriage, which, while it secures my personal happiness, is so favourable to our family interests, and am doubly eager for the arrival of my brother Alexis, from the certainty of having to welcome him in a home thus cheered and thus embellished.

There exists but one drawback on the comfort of our little circle (to which my cousin Alfred imparts all the charm of his liveliness and usage du monde), in the visits of our English friend, qui promène ses ennuis chez nous comme pour nous faire honneur! Hour after hour does he spend among us, saying little or nothing; but apparently of opinion that the little he does give himself the trouble to say, ought to repay us for the conversation he extracts in return. I never saw so persevering a querist. They say that most of the English who travel write books on their return to their own country; and I suspect Lord Elvinston is deriving what information he can from his St. Petersburg acquaintances, to grace his projected Travels in Russia. Unfortunately my cousin Alfred, who knew him in Paris last year, and who has little mercy for the foibles of his friends, suggested this hint to Ida, who has ever since been favouring our strange guest with the most preposterous scraps of news concerning us. As a foreigner, like himself, she is not bound, she says, to be accurately versed in our habits and usages. But this mystification is hardly fair. Judge how grievously the account he might send forth to the world would compromise both him and us!

I suspect I shall shortly have more to tell you respecting this unhappy man, who, but for his strange awkwardness, appears really amiable and obliging.—Farewell! Think of us often, and kindly; and rely upon my utmost endeavours to lighten the weariness of banishment to my adopted sister.

#### Letter XII.—From Viscount Elvinston to his Sister the Hon. Mrs. Leslie.

Your last letter, my dearest Mary, upbraids me for my project of passing a winter in St. Petersburg, as though I had announced the most preposterous thing in the world.

"Who ever heard," you remark, "of any English person passing a

winter in St. Petersburg!"

Were I to reply that this was possibly one of my inducements, you would twit me, in return, with love of singularity; a favourite charge of yours—though I defy you, in the whole circle of your acquaintance,

to point out a man less eccentric than myself.

In honest truth, however, I was not a little influenced in my determination by a desire to escape the routine of English absentees, who habitually spend their winters in Paris, Florence, Rome, or Naples, for the enjoyment of their own dinners, the Boulevards, the bals masqués, the Accademia ball, and the Holy Week,—congregating together like a flock of sheep,—and seeing, hearing, feeling, and understanding through a joint-stock set of senses and want of—sense; a club of stupid starers—an omnibus—an anything short of rationality

and free agency.

In St. Petersburg, on the other hand, there are no English save the resident merchants, and the embassy set; the former of whom form an independent order, rebutting the intrusions of the idle and dandified class of the community; while the latter produce no effect more deleterious than a drop of morphine in the waters of the Neva. One is consequently free to form one's own pleasant friendships and acquaintanceships; and so respectable has always been our diplomatic footing here, and so auspicious the connection of the native and English nobility through the Woronzoff and Pembroke families, that one benefits by the limitation. "Milor" is not, as in Paris, a word of mockery; or, as in Vienna, a motive for mistrust. They do not suppose, as in Rome, that we come to be made dupes of, and carry off sham medals and modern antiques; or, as in Greece, to tear down the bas-reliefs, and mutilate the statues of antiquity.

In St. Petersburg, my dear sister, we retain a tolerable reputation. The Russians derive, perhaps, some portion of their respect for our taste, from a circumstance that ought to produce a directly contrary result; the purchase, namely, of a large portion of their finest national collections from Great Britain; who, if she could not afford to keep them, certainly could not afford to part with them. From the days of Catherine till now, moreover, their best physicians and best portrait painters have been Englishmen; and an English head-gardener is held as indispensable at St. Petersburg, as in Paris an English "grom,"

An Englishman is consequently estimated here as an accomplished

personage.

Still, I repeat, the Thompson and Johnson tribe is wanting. The equivocals who infest more fashionable capitals, spare that of Russia; a awed by a climate and an emperor too rigorous to be sported with. Against the former, by the way, such precautions are of necessity adopted that, believe me, I never suffered so little from cold as during the present winter. Commend me to a Russian apartment, with its petch or stove producing the most genial and agreeable temperature, its double windows, and well-baized outer doors, as the safest refuge from the severities of January.

I love a decided climate. In India, or in Russia, one is not ashamed to be on one's guard against the sun or the icicles. The weather is no matter for jest, and consequently no matter for bravado; while London, where one is tempted to brave a March wind without a great coat, decause the sun shines and one's club laughs at one; or Italy, where one dies of a brain fever, because some fellow who has been there a few menths longer than oneself, scouts the idea of a coup de soleil, constitute my notion of a pernicious climate. However, I have no fault to find with the iciclophobia of my countrymen, of whom three only,

besides myself, are idling on the Nevskoï Prospekt.

Your letter entreats me, dearest Mary, since I have done so extravagant a thing as exile myself to the extremity of civilized Europe, to make the most of my advantages, and describe to you all I see, hear, and taste, that is out of the common way. By "common way," I conclude you mean "English way;" our noble country having long arrogated to itself the right of giving the law to the universe, subverting the laws and religion of weaker lands, and compelling them to eat cold beef and pickles, in place of their national boiled rice, soupe maigre, or barbecued children, as their climates and circumstances may require. Out of the English way, therefore, I see far too many things to be described within compass of a letter. The booted and bearded Russians sledging along at this moment under my windows on the Anglinskaya, form the very antipodes of the slower paced and smoother faced generation you are surveying from yours, in Park Lane. To you, however, I must concede the advantage of beholding lovely faces and graceful forms intermingling with your Sunday crowd; while here, ladies are never, and women rarely, to be seen in the throng.

With respect to public ceremonies characteristic of these northern latitudes. I have witnessed nothing so remarkable as the benediction of the waters by the archimandrite, on the Feast of the Epiphany; which, falling by the Greek calendar twelve days later than with us, is still, on the 18th of January, a sufficiently frigid festival to enable the Neva to bear, on ice four or five feet thick, a stately temple, erected opposite the Winter Palace, to enable the imperial family to participate in the ceremony, and behold their father and emperor well soaked in the water of the Neva, administered, as though it were holy water, by the hands of the archbishop. To reach the stream, a hole is cut in the ice in the centre of the temple, which is painted and adorned with religious devices, to gratify the eyes of the whole population of St. Petersburg assembled on the occasion; and amid the discharge of cannon and shouts of the people, a silver cross is plunged into the icy stream, whose fertility and welfare are especially commended in a prolonged prayer to the protection of Heaven.

At Pesth, a similar operation is performed, on the same day, by the

Greek archbishop on the waters of the Danube; and at Constantinople, the silver cross is flung with similar forms and adjurations into the vasty deep; so that sea-fish and fresh, turbot and lobster-sauce, as well as sturgeon and sterliad, have equally the benefit of this singular grace

before meat.

It strikes me, I own, that a blessing on the earth, here so unstable, might be more advantageous than the benediction of the waters. Nevertheless, in this country, which Mrs. Lavinia Ramsbottom might be justified in asserting to have derived its ancient name of Finland from the multitude and importance of its finny tribes, there is some pretext for the grateful devotion of the people during the archiepiscopal ceremony. The sparkling purity of the Neva water, in the summer season, is calculated to do honour to its efficacy. It forms, indeed, so favourite a beverage with the Russians, as to be bottled up for exportation with the wealthier orders on their journeys. The governor of the fortress, who is privileged to present a goblet filled with it to the emperor on the breaking up of the frost, receives the vessel filled with gold pieces, in return; though Nicholas has proved too far north for the said governor; and on finding the cup extend, year after year, almost in proportion to the annual extension of his own elastic frontiers, has commuted the gratuity,—in order that the pint of water might not expand into a hogshead,—for a specific sum.

The St. Peterburgers pretend that the Neva water is indispensable for the concoction of the exquisite tea in which they take such exquisite

delight.

I am surprised that the continental nations, who are so fond of ridiculing our Great British passion for the "cups that cheer, but not inebriate,"—so that even the great Goethe, when in jocular mood, used to charge English travellers with carrying their tea-kettles to boil on the crater of Etna—do not criticise the similar propensity of the Russians; who, receiving the finest tea from China, go to the greatest expense in perfecting the preparation. The tea provided for an istvoshtnik, or hackney-coachman, at his tavern, is, I promise you, of a more delicate species than the finest you ever tasted at Elvinston Castle. In summer, they drink it iced, as they do every other beverage; for the Russians, after looking at nothing but ice all the winter, seem to live upon it all the summer. Every well-conditioned family has its ice-house; and there are more ice-wells in a single district of St. Petersburg than in the whole of London put together.

The most interesting spectacle on the whole I have witnessed, is the gala held by the imperial family, at the Winter Palace, on New Year's night; when the better order of the citizens are admitted, to the number of five and twenty thousand, to pay the compliments of the season to the emperor. You can imagine nothing more gorgeous than the effect produced by the illumination of the splendid halls of which you have heard so much, crowded with people of all nations and languages submitted to the sceptre of the autocrat;—Russians and Poles, Tartars, Georgians, Samoyedes, Mongolians, Persians, Cossacks, Greeks, Armenians, habited in their several costumes—bearded, whiskered, mustachioed, smooth—in every form and variety of national habiliment; and preserving in the midst of the densest crowd the most courtly decorum, owing to the boundless veneration experienced by the

most loyal of empires for its most imperial of tzars.

I had the advantage of viewing the motley scene in an agreeable manner, having been admitted, in consequence of the illness of one of

our attachés, with the corps diplomatique; and can assure you that all you ever read in Arabian tales and believed to be Arabian fables, of pearls the size of pigeon's eggs and diamonds the size of hazel nuts, is verified by the display of jewels of this gorgeous court. The empress, who bears her burthen of treasure with considerable dignity, is literally a blaze of splendour; and the effect is not a little enhanced by the presence of her maids of honour, amounting to more than a hundred, who are required to appear in trains of scarlet, which, as well as crimson

and light blue, is a privileged colour of the court. It is not, however, the court which constitutes the charm of the spectacle: but rather the orderliness of so vast an assemblage of joyous, prosperous people, conducting themselves, in the palace of a prince regarded as the most despotic in Europe, with fifty times more ease, and quite as much propriety, as our own higher classes in the palaces or mansions of those a grade higher than themselves. But the Russians in general are remarkable for courtesy and deference. assemblage was set in movement by a Polonaise, commenced by the emperor with the ambassadress of Austria; and such is the influence of the presence of the sovereign and his family, that though the richest treasures and most beautiful works of art abound on every side, all ungodly covetings of other people's goods seemed paralyzed for a time. The whole five and twenty thousand people became for the moment, as it were, the family of the emperor; to whom, I can assure you, in spite of all we have heard from our Polish friends, his subjects are as fondly and blindly devoted as they were to his grandmother Catherine, whom they used to salute as their matiuska, or "dear mother." Father and mother are favourite words of endearment in Russia; and the sovereign invariably addresses his troops as "my children."

By midnight all was cleared, the emperor and the court having retired at eleven to sup in the theatre of the Hermitage; where, the frontage of the boxes being of cut crystal, the lights glittering through produce a striking effect. This was the most gorgeous and original fête I ever witnessed; but I suspect it requires a Russian or Turkish despotism to enable a sovereign to receive his subjects, with safety to

his property, on so paternal a scale.

Apropos to despotism, I must tell you that the known in Russia, like ghosts in England, is a thing oftener talked of than seen in the nineteenth century. To talk of the infliction of the knout on Russian ladies of distinction, as asserted by some of our grumbling friends "in ski," at the present day, would be as absurd as to talk in London of burning archbishops at Smithfield.

Apropos, my dear Mary, to the gala in question, it was there that, in the Salle Blanche, I was first struck by the splendid effect of the white stucco, which you will find from Whaley I have sent him over orders to attempt in the new gallery at Elvinston Castle. It is a cement formed of powdered marble, and other dazzlingly white materials, susceptible of acquiring the most polished surface, in the manner of scagliola, and of being painted in oils and gilt in the richest manner. When finished, it has the appearance of the purest porcelain, and nothing can be more exquisite than the effect it produces in welllighted ball or banqueting rooms.

The Russians imported it from the east, where it is much in vogue. They have a mode of rendering the surface as brilliant as gold or silver, by powderings of tale: but in my opinion a pure alabaster whiteness

constitutes its greatest charm,

I can describe nothing more brilliant than a state dinner in St. Petersburg, given in a banqueting chamber of this description, and decorated à la Russe; that is, having the magnificent dessert on the table when you enter the room, and the services brought round in succession. so as to prevent the senses of smell and sight from being offended by grosser viands, however indispensable fish, soup, and patties to the voracity of human appetite.

This fashion has, I am aware, been adopted by the Duke of D., and one or two others of my travelled countrymen. But John Bull is impatient of innovations, and, moreover, loves to ponder over his turtle and venison. To gaze upon peaches and pine-apples, while enjoying his sirloin or saddle of mutton, is to him a breach of the social compact; and he prefers the old three-courses-and-a-dessert order of things, to a banquet reminding one of some stately Italian fresco of the

Marriage of Cana, or a Martinian Belshazzar's feast.

I have only one further question to answer of those contained in

your letter—alluding, as a sister's letter ought, to Russian beauty.

In general, they are not fair of feature; yet some of the most beautiful women I ever beheld or heard of, have been Russians or Poles.

Witness as even you can witness, Madame Zanadoska—witness the portraits of Madame Tatischeff, Madame Narischkin, and Madame

Their manners are rather piquant than agreeable. They have all the vivacity of the French, without their tendency to exaltation or romance: for nothing can be more matter of fact than the character of the nation. They are consequently safer in all the relationships of life,

whether as regards love or friendship.

It happens, however, that the most delightful women I have seen in Russia are foreign, either by birth or education. The grand Duchess Helena, for instance—the charming wife of the far less charming grand Duke Michael (Michael appears a name disastrous to modern royalty), fair, graceful, gracious, accomplished, captivating, is a princess of Wirtemburg, and deserves, if ever woman did, a place on an imperial throne. Her influence with the emperor is considerable; and as her health and family circumstances have frequently compelled her to try the air of foreign countries, she has been the means of conveying to many a court in Europe an impression of the elegance and courtliness of St. Petersburg.

In private life, the family with whom I am most intimately associated, is that of the Baron von Rehfeld, whose wife is a Frenchwoman, whose daughter a German, and whose step-daughter Parisian, by that second nature, education. Mademoiselle Erloff, therefore, though the most attractive girl I have seen since I quitted my own country, is scarcely citable as a Russian, since she knows as little of St. Petersburg as myself. To describe her to you would, I fear, require, if not more leisure than I have to write, at least more than you may have to read, at the close of so long a letter. I will therefore defer, till some future occasion, making you acquainted with la Marguerite des Marguerites.

Farewell, dearest sister, - my affection for whom defies even the atmosphere which, for the last few days, has put all the istvoshtniks

in St. Petersburg in peril of their noses.

A thousand compliments of the season from a brother whose attachment defies "all seasons and their change"—and even a degree of cold fifty below freezing point.

## Letter XIII.-From Ida von Rehfeld to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau,

You little thought, chère bonne, that in giving me a commission to execute in St. Petersburg for your friend, the Comtesse de Choisy, you were procuring me a most agreeable acquaintance. The baroness informed me that it was indispensable for me to deliver the packet in person, as a respect due to the position of Princess W—; and, though reluctant to attempt such a ceremony alone, I congratulated myself on my obedience to the suggestion, on finding in the princess all one has a right to expect of a Parisianised Russian, of whom Monsieur de Vaudreuil declares that Paris engrafted on St. Petersburg is alcohol floating on mercury.

Since her widowhood, it seems, the princess has spent the greater portion of her time in the south of Europe—a privilege for which she is said to have paid largely. It is only since the death of the Emperor Alexander that she has been forced, for the preservation of her estates, to establish herself in Russia. Still, however, the habits acquired during her residence in foreign countries prevail; and she is the only person I have found indulge here in a freedom of speech rivalling that

of Count Alfred.

At our first interview, I conclude she must have taken a fancy to me; for the following day I received a note from her complaining of a violent migraine, and entreating me to pay her a friendly visit au coin du feu. The baroness being absent from home on a round of courtly visitations, I accepted the proposal, and found my new friend literally established au coin du feu; for, while her suite of state apartments is necessarily warmed à la Russe, with the gigantic stoves in use here, her own-little boudoir has the open fire-place for wood you have described to me as forming so bright a feature in a French drawing-room. Beside it, in the coziest of fauteuils, did she instal me; and in a half an hour I learnt more of the gossip of St. Petersburg than I should in half a dozen years in the society of Madame von Rehfeld, who is, au fond de l'âme, Frenchwoman enough to treat me as a nonentity, and, perhaps, stepmother enough to regard me as an incipient foe.

"I am delighted to see you in this familiar way," observed the princess, "for I was afraid the baroness might make difficulties. We ought to be fond of each other,—since she is French by birthright; I, by nature. But we are not. We belong to rival factions, and hate

each other in the civilest way in the world."

Till then, I had been unaware of the existence of distinct parties in the great world of St. Petersburg. But it seems that a jealousy is supposed to exist between the empress and the grand Duchess Helena, and, as in the case of kings, in whose innocent names their ministers make peace and war, the adherents of the two great ladies, relieve the monotony of a life of courtiership by stirring up ill-will between their high mightinesses. Countess Erloff, as a lady of honour, was necessarily engaged from the first moment on the side of the empress,—that is, on the side of l'Amphitryon où l'on dine, said the princess, laughing heartily at her own wit. "Poor woman! she has had a hard life of it! Ruined before she was born, they forced her to marry a horrible old general, smelling of schnapps and tobacco; and his death, instead of restoring her to independence, left her only more wretched than before. Had not the empress taken a fancy to her, she must have buried herself

alive on her son's ruined estates, where no one would have ever heard

"It was indeed a fortunate chance," said I, somewhat surprised at the cool frankness of my new acquaintance, though I admit that my manner encouraged her to believe me somewhat less than the most devoted of

step-daughters.

Fortunate for the welfare of her children perhaps; but for herself, I suspect she had no easy time of it, or she would scarcely have accepted the second marriage she did; your father having, I am told, no prospect of his present appointment at the time the engagement was made; and if anything can exceed the odiousness of the society in St. Petersburg. I should imagine it to be that of a petty German court."

I suppose I ought to have felt affronted, instead of which I was quite as well satisfied to make a sacrifice of the Residenz, as of my step-

"I was always led to believe," said I, "that Madame von Rehfeld enjoyed a very happy as well as a highly honourable position at court, at the moment of her marriage."

An expressive gesture implied a decided negative.

"We have reason to suspect that Madame Erloff is no great favourite with the emperor," she replied. "Under such a disadvantage, how could she lead a pleasant life? In the first place, he dislikes French people in general. In the second, Madame Erloff had excited his displeasure by causing her daughter to be educated in Paris. Nicholas is Russian to the heart's core, as, to do him justice, it is the duty of our tzar to be; and it is probable he saw from the first that a woman with Vaudreuil blood in her veins (left behind here like a wreck on the shore by the breaking up of the exiled Bourbon court at Mittau) was likely to prove an unwelcome companion to the Strogonoffs, Narischkins, Zouboffs, and their kind, as well as to encourage the empress in her passion for French gewgaws and French amusements. However, he put up with her, as he does with anything favoured by the partiality of his family; though I suspect that the effort made to procure Baron Rehfeld the appointment which facilitated the marriage arose chiefly from the feeling that the imperial household would sustain a very reparable loss in the charming Countess Erloff. In the corps diplomatique, on the other hand, the idea of a Madame von Rehfeld was supportable."

Such was the princess's free version of the affair. Very little encouragement on my part soon induced her to add, "To own the truth, the emperor is supposed to detest her as an intriguante, which she certainly is; and we were consequently the more surprised to hear of you all at the Anitschkoff balls. That the emperor found you charming, belle Ida, and has since mentioned you with the highest admiration, is less wonderful. You have nothing in common with the baroness; nay, may be supposed to entertain towards her the antipathy sure to exist

between every step-mother and daughter."

Of the latter observation, I took no heed. I was considering, not without emotion, the princess's allusion to the favourable opinion pronounced upon me by the emperor. It is impossible for you to understand, chère bonne, the honour conferred by imperial notice in this abjectly servile place.

To own the truth, I was dying to see you, after all I had heard of your success at the Anitschkoff ball," resumed Princess W. "I was not invited. I have lived too much in France to be well thought of by

Nicholas, and am too much devoted to the Michaëloff set to stand well in the court *coterie*. By the way, those who see you with envious eyes pretend that the admiration you excited arose from a resemblance discovered by the tzar between you and our lovely grand duchess as she appeared on her first arrival here, in all the fairness and joyousness of her happy youth."

I expressed myself proportionably flattered, and am convinced that one of the princess's motives for soliciting the acquaintance of one so much younger than herself was a certain feminine curiosity to learn whether the resemblance held good in other respects; the grand duchess being one of the most accomplished and spirituelle princesses

in Europe.

"And what does Madame von Rehfeld intend doing with the young Englishman whom, according to report, she has installed by your fireside?" resumed the princess.

"I have too much filial piety, or perhaps too little curiosity," replied I, "to have made any inquiry on the subject." And I trust I looked

as little concerned as became me in making the assertion.

"If she were able to secure him for Mademoiselle Erloff, she would doubtless renounce her projects upon Sergius Gallitzin, who after all would be no great match, for he has still his fortune to make."

"I should not imagine Lord Elvinston the sort of man to be made a

dupe of," I replied.

"So people said of your father, my dear little friend, when Madame Erloff first opened the trenches of her German campaign; yet you see they were mistaken. She is just the sort of woman to throw people off their guard, by an appearance of being unguarded herself; whereas not a word or movement of hers but has its object. For my part, I suspect that her projects against the Englishman regard neither her daughter nor her step-daughter. The emperor is supposed to be inclined towards these English just now: in the first place, from a natural partiality; in the next, from a desire to mark his animosity towards the French; and Madame von Rehfeld has it consequently at heart to stand well with the British embassy."

It was not, of course, for me to explain to the princess the real state of the case; but I gave her to understand that the visits of the young lord to our house were not exactly the result of the baroness's invitations,—a remark which I concluded she understood, for she replied

by a significant smile.

"The emperor and empress are to be present at the ball given next week by the English ambassadress," said she; "a distinction withheld from the Duc de Mortémart because—but I dare say you know the

whole story."

I knew it well; but remembering the favourite axiom of Monsieur de Vaudreuil, that in order to stand well with the world, we must submit to be instructed in many things we understand by people who know nothing about them, I submitted to be told the anecdote of a bévue, real or pretended, on the part of the Duc de Mortémart, who, having invited the élite of the Russian nobility to witness the private theatricals in his hotel, gave them by way of a suitable entertainment, in the midst of their Turkish démélé—the piece of "L'Ours et le Pacha!" It is true the epigram was confined altogether to the play-bills, the piece bearing no reference that could be misconstrued into offence. But the emperor's mind had taken the fold of displeasure; and who is to smooth an imperial spirit when rumpled?

I am delighted, by the way, to hear that the court is to be present at this English fête; for though it may lose perhaps, in consequence, in ease and spirit, I shall watch with some curiosity the conduct of our Ours of an Englishman, as compared with that of Count Alfred under

similar circumstances.

"The Gallitzins would be well satisfied to see a marriage concluded between Prince Sergius and your step-sister," observed the princess. "on account of the influence supposed to be exercised at court by her mother; for, after all, since the emperor has overcome in her favour one of his strongest prejudices, some such influence must exist. But, for my part, I think Mademoiselle Erloff would be much happier in marrying this Englishman, who is of a suitable age, and as rich as Crossus; whereas Gallitzin has as little to boast in the way of youth as in the way of fortune. I am going to the English ball, and shall make my own observations. It would be a good thing for all of you to get Marguerite well married, and out of the way."

"Not out of mine, believe me," cried I, with perfect sincerity.
"Little hypocrite!" ejaculated the princess, with a smile.

"Perfectly sincere, I assure you. Marguerite is the sweetest and most affectionate creature in the world. Marguerite fully reconciles me to

her mother."

"So she does many people, or the baroness would lead a sorry life of The worst of it is, that the poor girl herself, unless speedily settled, may be led to take a fancy to that good-looking, but good for nothing else, cousin of hers; who, even in Paris, where roueism is canonization, was pronounced too roue by half. I knew him there, two winters ago. Having been intimate with the old Countess Auguste during her emigration, I was a frequent guest at the Hôtel de Vaudreuil; where, in return for the three or four summers she spent at my countryhouse, near Tzarsko-çelo, she bestowed upon me divers glasses of eau sucrée, and the society of her family, including Count Alfred. do her justice, it was an exchange that was no robbery, for her coterie was one of the pleasantest in Paris; whereas, in my house, she obtained nothing but board, lodging, and the most disagreeable company in the world."

"Do you suppose that there is any likelihood of a connection between the cousins?" said I, carelessly; somewhat startled that this

should never have occurred to me before.

"Between Marguerite and Count Alfred? Quelle idée! The dowry of Mademoiselle Erloff consists in her mother's interest with the empress. Of what use is that to the Vaudreuils? Alfred possesses a very moderate fortune, and must double it by marriage."

"I understand," said I. "Her mother's interest at court is to marry

Marguerite to Prince Gallitzin."

"Exactly. She will then attain a very brilliant position; and the emperor and all parties be satisfied. It would not surprise me if the prince were sent to London or Paris in consequence. He has exactly the qualifications for one of our great embassies."
"I have always understood," said I, inadvertently, "that Prince

Gallitzin possessed considerable abilities.

"I did not allude to his abilities. Implicit devotion to the emperor, a wooden, inexpressive countenance, and square and imposing shoulders, are the grand qualifications for Russian diplomacy. In Paris or London, il faut savoir prendre une attitude imposante!"

"If that be the case, poor Marguerite will make a far less eligible

ambassadress than the prince an ambassador," said I; "for she is the

most timid creature in the world."

"Then her dark brows and expressive mouth are no truth-tellers!" rejoined the princess. "I gave her credit for possessing a decided character under a quiet exterior; and, consequently, judged her ineligible as an ambassadress. That which is good for the lord is bad for the lady. Two good heads in one household is just one too many. But who can surmise what girls may turn out when married? The dingy cygnet makes the whitest swan; the yellowest-downed chick darkens into the blackest fowl. Time will show us Princess Gallitzin in her real plumage."

It would interest you little, chère bonne, you, to whom the court of St. Petersburg is terra incognita, were I to recount the many wild hints and surmises in which Madame de Choisy's rattling friend indulged for my amusement. Suffice it that the carte du pays she afforded me differed, in all respects, from the chart I find laid down at home; and my father with his precise notions, and Madame la Baronne with her almost devotional awe of those higher powers whom at Schloss Rehfeld sheaffected to hold so lightly, would have been little pleased could they have surmised the insight I was obtaining into the social mysteries of the court. However, if it be a proof of sense to talk well, it is a still greater to know when to hold one's tongue. On my return home I breathed not a syllable of these revelations.

You are, perhaps, tempted to exclaim that it is scarcely less so to know when to hold one's pen. Let me, therefore, conclude with a renewal of my thanks for the pleasant acquaintance which you and

Madame de Choisy have procured me.

### Letter XIV.-From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to Count Jules.

I HAVE so often had to thank you for amusing me with your adventures, my dear Jules, which derived so much piquancy from the frankness invariably gracing your narratives, that I obey your injunctions to give you a full, true, and particular account of the suite of my

amourette.

Know then that of late my beautiful Ida has taken upon herself the airs of a beauty, and become furiously jealous. Were her jealousy of the right sort, that is, jealousy arising from the intenseness of her affection for me, I would forgive her. But, to do it justice, it is a mean passion—the jealousy of an envious girl. She cannot endure to see Marguerite as much cared for as herself; and our little cousin is so good, gentle, and unpretending, that I feel no indulgence for any angry feeling of which she is the object. I am persuaded Mademoiselle von Rehfeld is far more vexed by the idea of her step-sister becoming an ambassadress than by that of her possessing a certain degree of interest in my heart.

Not but that she is well aware I bestow on Marguerite Erloff only a species of affection she is neither likely to obtain nor desirous of obtaining; a sort of homeish, fireside, trusting, loving love, such as a mere beauty, nay, a beauty exquisitely talented, never yet succeeded in

creating.

Be the cause of her jealousy, however, what it may, jealous she has

certainly become; and jealousy has had the usual effect of making her unkind and unjust. I, however, remain as just as Aristides—not only just, but justice-dealing, and am, consequently, resolved to punish her resentments against my unoffending cousin; d'autant plus that it may restore circulation to my coagulated blood if I contrive to divert myself a little at her expense, or the expense of any other person here.

I was in hopes the French theatre would have done its part towards keeping me warm through the winter by laughing at its execrable tragedies and crying at the most barbarously massacred edition of Molière ever suffered to defy the rigour of the laws of decency. But even that pleasure has failed. One could not go on smiling for ever at the complacency with which these savages applaud what they believe to be the French drama; and which might as well have been imported from the shores of the Gambia as from those of the Seine. It is really no fault of mine that I am forced to divert myself a little at the

expense of my saucy heroine of the Oder.

You recollect that long-legged Englishman who used to keep the club in a roar last winter by the disjointed movements of his dislocated person? He is here, rich as Golconda, and dull as—as—alas! I can say nothing worse than—"dull as St. Petersburg." Fancy that I have succeeded in persuading this cold-blooded animal into love with Marguerite Erloff, and the family, including both the girls, that he is in love with Ida. The cross-purposes to which this has given rise are amusing beyond belief. Aware that Englishmen are the most rash and unauthorized people in the world in such matters, they are hourly expecting Elvinston to blunder out proposals for the hand of the lily of Rehfeld, of which he has as much intention as I of demanding that of one of the little grand-duchesses.

Our excellent cousin, the baroness, who entertains some sort of project for her step-daughter to which I cannot obtain a clue, is always bantering Ida upon the originalities of her supposed adorer; whereas, had she a suspicion that this man who, if he chose, could buy up the hundred and fifty thousand serfs which constitute the fortunes of some of the Tartar princes of this singular country, such as Yousoupoff and others—was épris with my cousin, she would be the first to discover in the viscount the Chesterfield of modern England. But that I am satisfied Marguerite would earn the knout by refusing this British Cræsus, I could not in my conscience allow them all to go on groping

in the darkness visible I have created.

The other night, the English ambassadress gave a ball of singular splendour; at which the emperor and empress, the grand duke and his lovely consort, were present. The thing was done in excellent taste; though the splendid apartments were perhaps insufficiently ventilated in consequence of the fears entertained by the empress of taking cold, and increasing the perilous delicacy of her health. There was no crowd. Not more than three hundred persons were invited; and those the ditte of the court and corps diplomatique.

Having dined with the Rehfelds, I accompanied them to the fête; and was not a little amused at watching the manœuvres of poor Ida to keep aloof from me, so as to be disengaged for the first dance, in order to give her hand to the only young Englishman of rank now in St. Petersburg, who might therefore be regarded as king of the ball.

I was the more diverted, knowing it to be Elvinston's intention to

engage Marguerite; and when he accosted us almost before we had traversed the ante-room or paid our compliments to Lady H., to secure his lovely partner, I could scarcely preserve gravity enough to note the crest-fallen countenance with which Mademoiselle von Rehfeld saw herself supplanted. She seemed to fancy it must be an oversight, and looked as if she longed to tell him that, in one of his habitual

fits of absence, he was mistaking one sister for the other.

Judge, however, of her amazement, nay, of mine, when the viscount, on receiving a message from Narischkin intimating that he would have the honour of dancing the following quadrille with the empress, coolly replied that "he had a previous engagement to Mademoiselle Erloff!" The horror of the equerry by whom the message was conveyed and the answer received, was beyond description. His indignation seemed at first too big for words; and the contrast between his flashing eyes and the cool imperturbability of Elviuston, was to the last degree amusing.

The ambassador, of course, interfered, to prevent so heinous a breach of etiquette as the delivery of such a message; but the air of fretfulness and ennui with which poor Elvinston waked through his quadrille, was almost as amusing as the air of profound bitterness of Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, on finding all eyes directed towards my little cousin as

the choice of him who had been chosen by the tzarina.

It was probably the excitement arising from mortification, that lent so vivid a colour to her cheek, and exercised over her susceptible nature the charm said to be contained for others in the cestus of Venus. She really looked divine; so divine, that no one was surprised when the emperor, after conversing for a few minutes with the baroness, pursued for more than half an hour his conversation with her step-daughter, whom I had been careful to leave neglected upon Madame von Rehfeld's arm.

There is, I am compelled to own, an instinctive high-breeding in Ida, and a *finesse* in her tone of reply, which Nicholas probably found as refreshing to his ear after the vulgar subservience of the herd of Petersburgian belles, as the sight of her simple white dress and the natural camellias in her hair, amid the heavy harness of ponderous jewels sustained by the Yousoupoffs, Pashkoffs, Zuboffs, et hoc genus omne.

From that moment, alas! instead of the distinction I had intended to confer upon Marguerite Erloff by Elvinston's homage, it was Ida who became queen of the ball. All eyes were on the new beauty; and I could perceive, by the singular air of deprecation assumed by our trusty cousin in addressing the lovely Zavadoska, Madame Witgenstein, and others of whom she stands in awe, that she fancied she had achieved

a miracle.

The poor viscount, meanwhile, from the time he could extricate himself from the honours imposed upon him, stationed himself by the side of Marguerite, in order to dance the second quadrille. As usual, timid, grave, and absent, my little cousin allowed him to lead her to a mazurk that was forming, in the belief that it was another French country dance. There they stood, convicted by the striking up of the orchestra; Marguerite looking marble and motionless, as the statue of a muse—Elvinston awkward, guilty, and ghastly, like the body of a malefactor cut down from a gibbet; for not a step of the mazurk (which is, as you know, a dance requiring some study), could my poor English victim accomplish. It seemed, however, a breach of etiquette to recede; for

the set was not only formed, but included the empress and several of her ladies of honour. Nothing could be more ridiculous than their

position.

I conclude that some mysterious signal must have passed between Marguerite and her step-sister; for, having been compelled to turn round to answer a question addressed to me, en passant, by the Grand Duke Michael, I perceived, when again able to look towards the dances, that Ida and the young Prince Gagarin were filling the place of the unhappy couple; and so admirably, by the piquant grace with which Mademoiselle von Rehfeld executed certain figures rivalling the Cracovienne in sprightliness, that every eye in the room was upon them. The empress, herself, who certainly dances to perfection, was completely eclipsed. The baroness is too good a courtier to have allowed her daughter to display such matchless grace, even had it been possible. But there was no opportunity to afford a suitable lesson to Ida.

Elvinston, meanwhile, all gratitude to the adroit fairy by whose readiness in communicating with her sister, he was indebted for extrication from what was to him an excruciating position, having broughback Marguerite to her chaperon, now mounted guard over her, mute and motionless as one of the twelve sable Moors who watch during the

court fêtes, the entrance of the gorgeous Taurida palace.

These Englishmen really exceed even the chivalrousness of chivalry in their paroxysms of attachment. Heedless of the ridicule he was incurring by so great a breach of decorum at this open demonstration of devotion to a girl, there did he remain, his eyes fixed upon Mademoiselle Erloff, his arms to his side, and his knees to each other! It is true he had previously undergone a rebuke from the baroness, upon his want of manners in throwing himself coolly into a seat by Marguerite's side; which I could not persuade her was not intended as an insult, but simply a specimen of the free and easy manners of Englishmen when once they throw off their mauvaise honte; or rather, perhaps, a proof that they never do throw off their mauvaise honte, but

merely assume a virtue (or a vice) where they have it not.

Madame von Rehfeld, meanwhile, was on thorns. Regarding this awkward appendage to her party as a ridicule attached to it, and attached to it in the shape of an adorer of Ida who was civil to her daughter merely for the sake of another, she had hardly patience with either Marguerite or her Amadis; more particularly when she saw the enthusiasm commanded among the Russians by the admirable style in which the lily of Rehfeld contrived to execute their national dances. The admiration of the emperor was, of course, the finger-post which had served to point out her merits to their admiration; but once noticed, it was impossible to withdraw their eyes. Even that immensely dull fellow, Sergius Gallitzin, who deo volente, is, some day or other, to have the honour of an alliance with the Vaudreuils, fixed upon her those two cold grey eyes accustomed to dwell only upon parchments and précis; apparently of opinion, with all the rest of the room, that for the future, the Empress of all the Russias would no longer pass for empress of all the dancers.

The fête was a very brilliant one, the supper excellent; and every thing arranged in that admirable style which in the English embassies at St. Petersburg, Vienna, and other continental cities, serves to convince one of the utter want of taste of the English. Between the dullness of their entertainments in London, and the brilliancy of their

entertainments in all other places, it is clear how much their riches and prodigality are able to accomplish, the moment they become

directed by the better taste of foreign nations.

As regards my private diversions, I am becoming a degree better satisfied with St. Petersburg. I scrupulously avoided from the first yoking myself exclusively to the car of the Rehfelds; for my lilythough really a lily, and now an imperial one, does not prevent my seeing that there are roses in the parterre. I contrive to put some vanity into my pleasures. One is not thrown away here. People know how to appreciate one. The Russians, with their serfs, and splendours, and beautiful wives, are the most ennuyé of Satan's creatures. They possess a strong appetite for pleasure, money to bring it withal, but alas! not a particle of the article in demand is forthcoming for purchase. Any novelty, therefore, whether natural, artificial, or abstract, is welcomed as a god-send. In Alexander's time, they used to gamble beyond all precedent of gambling; and attempt a thousand other things better adapted to the latitudes of Paris than those of St. Petersburg. Now, the moral and most domestic tone of the court forbids outrageous breaches of propriety; and the only thing remaining to divert them is a detestable French theatre, and still more detestable French ballet and Italian Opera; for which they bribe to their frozen capital, at the cost of their weight in gold (and that they are heavy enough, the Lord he knows), all the worst performers in Europe—the leavings of the impresarios—with now and then a star of some magnitude; to be amalgamated with their native screamers of screams, and throwers of summersets.

On the other hand, they possess a charming pastime exclusively national, in which, as is the case with most national diversions in most countries, it is mavvais ton to take delight; the ice-hills—which we formerly attempted to imitate at our public gardens of Paris, under the name of Montagnes Russes, by means of an inclined plane of boards, with ropes and pulleys, and at the cost of limbs innumerable, and a life or two per season—as if anything save the glassy surface of ice could impart to the gliding sledge the ease as well as rapidity of movement essential to the enjoyment of the real pleasure of the thing—the presence of the favoured fair one condescends to place at one's feet, in order to dash with her down the all but perpendicular descent, which might

be accepted as emblematical of the fall of the angels.

After boring oneself to annihilation by playing whole evenings with these lovely Scythians their stupid game of La Mouche, or the still stupider proverbs and petits jeux out of which they contrive to extract every particle of gaiety and colour, it is really invigorating to pass the following morning with them in precipitating oneself down an ice-hill. Furred to the chin, like Laplanders, and squatting in our sledges with nearly their national grace of attitude, several brilliant parties in which I have been engaged have dashed down, again and again, their fifty feet, with a degree of perseverance engendering a frightful appetite for sterlet soup; though, by the way, the people here do their utmost to render dinner impossible, through the ardour with which they stimulate their hunger by an ante-meal, called the Schälchen, consisting of all the filthiest compounds devised by a Greenlander's cuisine—caviar, cheese, salt-fish, and sausages redolent of garlic, acompanied by brandy and other spirituous liquors. All they leave to be desired is a dose of assafcetida to overpower, by a single mauvaise odeur, the concatenation of disgusting smells emitted by their delicate repast. What purpose it can serve, unless to act as a foil to the good French dinner it enhances by force of contrast, I cannot possible conjecture.

I began this letter with the ball of the English embassy; and, rondeau

fashion, will finish it with a recapitulation of the strain.

Imagine the triumph of my little Saxon charmer, when invited by the emperor for the cotillon! Instead of seeming to participate in the awe which, in spite of all their protestations to the contrary, is always and clearly inspired by the conversation of the tzar into the hearts of his subjects—however fair, however high and mighty—Mademoiselle von Rehfeld made herself as unembarrassed and agreeable a partner to him as she could have been to me; that is, far more lively and agreeable, I flatter myself, than she would have been with me; for I hold it no compliment when a woman is sufficiently at ease with one to make herself agreeable. I love to see them downcast, timid, even awkward. I like them to be properly influenced by my presence.

The emperor, however, was satisfied; though he walked through the cotillon with his usual nonchalance in such matters, and probably merely to gratify the Heytesburys by taking part in their ball, no matter with what partner. It was noticed around me that for some time past Nicholas had not been seen in such cheerful spirits; and trust me that, in a city where every change of the imperial countenance influences rain and sunshine, the public funds, and the pleasures of private society, these people know how to calculate to the millionth

part of a degree, the rise and fall of such a barometer.

I have not been near the Rehfelds since the ball. Methinks I could not stand the saucy countenance of this little wren which, ever since,

has probably fancied itself an imperial eagle.

As to poor Elvinston, who was evidently born to become a very great man or a very ridiculous one, so indifferent is he to the opinions of the world and so careless of the usages of society, his devotion to Marguerite Erloff was so ludicrously manifested throughout the evening, that I saw many a contemptuous shrug on the part of the grandes dames de la cour demonstrate their contempt for the ill-manners of the English people; who, if one is to believe their own account of themselves, are too polished in mind to require the polish of deportment held important by other civilized nations, and too moral to see that the wives of one's friends are pleasanter company than their daughters.

You ask me for political news, dear Jules! On that head, spare me, and spare yourself. The neraest approach to political news, properly so called, one ever obtains here, is intelligence of the colour of the empress's new bonnet; or a whisper concerning the number of salutations performed by the emperor to his loving subjects between the palace and the parade. Nobody here talks politics. The politics in vulgar circulation, are, it is well known, so wide of truth, that it is mockery to repeat them. In affairs of state, according to the Russian system,

the surface is so far from the centre, that-

But if I ask you to spare me politics, let me in return, spare you rhetorical illustrations! Suffice it that those reports of the day generated in Paris by a few leading coteries, and in London by a few leading clubs, are wholly wanting here. When you hear in St. Petersburg, a phrase commencing "it is said," be assured that it will end with the announcement of a variation of the thermometer; or that at worst, the catastrophe deplored regards a few coachmen, lacqueys, or horses, frozen in the streets at the close of the last night's ball. Do not take me quite

au pied de la lettre! You know me well enough to pronounce your own verdict,

Elvinston is just come in, with very red eyes, and is waiting for me to seal my letter to unbosom his griefs. I am convinced he has been refused either by the mother or the daughter; most likely the latter, for mammas seldom frown upon such people. The greatest calf on earth, if a golden one, has a sure chance of it! Adieu!

# Letter XV .- From Ida von Rehfeld, to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

I cannot divest myself of an idea, however absurd, chère bonne, that you must be perfectly acquainted with all I am about to tell you. Conscious that it has formed, for two days past, the topic of universal conversation here, I seem to lose sight of the distance that parts us; and still more the isolation of Rehfeld—remote, inaccessible, dull, obscure Rehfeld—which I suspect remained ignorant of the earthquake of Lisbon, twenty years after the great event.

My event is not quite an earthquake; yet in the court circle here, it

My event is not quite an earthquake; yet in the court circle here, it excites as much interest as if one of the lesser capitals of Europe had been swallowed up; or as if one of the great powers had committed one of those acts of littleness which great powers alone are permitted to commit with impunity. This, by the way, is a rash political flight for St. Petersburg! But as I fancy my recently acquired importance has arisen from a sally of the same wild nature, I doubt whether I should

do well to cultivate discretion.

My dearest bonne, tell me, have I in my previous letters, succeeded in making you sensible of the mightiness of the Czar of Muscovy sensible of it in a way underivable from the showing of maps, gazetteers, or the cyphers of statistics? Is it, in fact, possible for any one who has not experienced a cold of ten degrees to be aware of the greatness of a grandson of Catherine the Great? Certainly not! You believe him to be only a double or triple king of France, or England. Undeceive yourself! In Russia the emperor is infallible, as in Rome the pope. Not only the emperor can do no wrong, but the smallest of his actions does not fall short of virtue. He is colossal, infinite—in a word, absolute; for who can presume to be accurate in the admeasurement of an autocrat?

I have heard Alfred de Vaudreuil declare that Russians of high rank, in Paris or other continental cities, however reckless in their ordinary conduct (and what so reckless as a high-born Russian?) however free in discussion and daring in levity, may be stopped short and frozen dumb on tho spot, by mere allusion to the name of the emperor! The padlock imposed on the lips of Papageno, in our beloved Zauberflöte,

possesses not a more efficient necromancy.

But you are beginning to wonder, chère bonne, whether I am enditing you an essay upon the dignity of the imperial throne, such as you used to exact from me by way of French exercise. Not exactly! I only want to bring before you, in truest truth, the elevation of the Cæsar of the Scythians, in order to make you sensible of the importance conferred on myself by his notice. I assure you that the lapse of half an hour

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spent in laughing and chatting with him, has added more cubits to my

stature than I have arithmetic to compute.

I am not surprised that he likes me. I say this without vanity, and without pride—without reference to beauty or grace, wit or amiability but simply because convinced that any human being albeit by circumstance imperial, must grow sick of eternal adulation. Nothing short of

a divinity can tolerate perpetual incense.

Now, as Nicholas is nothing to me, who am neither his subject nor desirous to become so—nay, since there are other men in the world whose good opinion would afford me far higher gratification—I made no effort to please him; neither hung enamoured upon his words, nor watched his looks with fear and trembling. I was—to you I will tell the whole truth—I was in such a state of nervous excitement from indignation at the conduct of Monsieur de Vaudreuil and Lord Elvinston, who were evidently in league to turn me into derision at the ball of the English Embassy, that I scarcely took heed of my words or actions, when invited by the emperor to become his partner in the cotillon.

I suspect (I fear I am somewhat given to suspecting) that I was indebted for the honour to some incidental impulse. I am convinced that Nicholas had some unexplained motive for choosing to mix in that cotillon; and he happened to be conversing with the baroness at the moment the idea presented itself. I was at hand. I was apart from the feelings and persons which then occupied his mind; and he was creating no jealousies by choosing for his partner a girl without rank

or precedence.

But this frigid listlessness was not of long duration. When he found that the tame automaton (of whom he had thought to take no further heed than one of his imperial effigies in bronze may take of the bronze charger on which it is mounted) had words and thoughts, and courage to give them utterance, he became interested. Startled into attention by my boldness, he listened till he became pleased, and was pleased to listen again. In one minute, I had arrested his eye; in two, his attention; in ten, we were laughing and talking together, like old friends. It was I who had already taken upon myself the task of interrogation—the part of the dialogue usually usurped by his Imperial Majesty.

By degrees, I too became interested. I must plead guilty to the meanness of having gloried in my triumph. At that moment, it was a

triumph indeed!

The empress was dancing in the same cotillon with the young Prince of Saxe-Gotha; and the whole *élite* of the court was witness of the good-natured intimacy which the czar was pleased to allow me to

establish between us.

And now, dearest bonne, comes the cream of the affair! If you could but have beheld the baroness on our return home! You remember the sort of court she paid me on her arrival at Schloss Rehfeld; the sort of cajoling, bantering, artful manner in which she felt her way, whether it were better to subdue me by authority, or coax me by obsequiousness? Her present homage was of a directly different nature. She now hardly ventured to accost me; and I could see she was surprised when my father continued to address me in his usual, ostensibly cool, but really affectionate manner.

Next morning, I awoke with an impression—that, next to the rising

of the sun in St. Petersburg, my rising was of the greatest importance. So glorified did I feel by the distinction imparted in this most servile of courts by the emperor's notice, as to fancy myself no longer the Ida of the day before; still less, the poor, simple Ida of last winter. When Lord Elvinston made his appearance as usual, to sigh and blush, looking as if he had just been extricated from the wheel by an executioner. instead of resenting upon him his recreancy of the preceding night, I could hardly forbear thanking him for a desertion which had stimulated my cheeks into bloom, and my spirits into wit. I fear, however, that the tone of irony in which my gratitude was couched, may have assumed the tone of pique; for Monsieur de Vaudreuil had the unequalled impertinence to whisper an alarum to my pride.

"Beware of giving to an Englishman such grounds for exultation!" said he. "Let him not perceive how deeply he has wounded the conse-

quence of the Lily of Rehfeld."

And now came a finishing stroke to the baroness's perplexities. We had too often talked over together the Elvinston affair, for me to be ignorant that she was in hourly expectation of my receiving an offer of his hand. Judge, therefore, of her amazement on seeing our gawky guest, after ten minutes' grave conversation with Marguerite which I am convinced she thought regarded only me, suddenly seize his hat, clap it on his head, press it over his eyes regardless of our presence in the saloon, and then rush sobbing from the room.

"What in the world have you been saying to him, Marguerite?"

cried she, as soon as the the door closed after him.

"I should have been more cautious in my expressions, had I supposed his feelings to be so deeply engaged," replied my dear, good little step-

"But you did know they were deeply engaged!" retorted her mother. "Have we not all seen the man sighing and dying ever since the day he was presented to her?"

Marguerite raised her mild, brown, hare-like eyes to her mother's,

in mute interrogation.

"You must have been fully aware," persisted the baroness, "that he was pledged heart and soul to Ida; and whatever opinion you may entertain of her feelings towards him, you had no authority to bid him despair. If he were to be refused, it was my province to intimate your sister's decision."

Marguerite's colour went and came. I could easily discern her hesitation between the duty of avowing the truth to her mother, and the comfort of screening herself from further reprehension under the erroneous impressions imbibed by Madame von Rehfeld. Her natural candour prevailed.

"We have all been mistaken, dear mamma," said she.

Elvinston fancies himself in love with me."

"With you, child?-Nonsense!"

"I can only assure you that last night he professed for me the most

ardent attachment."

"Then why," cried the baroness, who, having started to her feet, was now advancing towards her daughter, "why was he in that state of emotion on quitting the room?"

"He was hurt, I suppose, to find that I could never be his

wife."

"But why never? I have made no positive engagements with Prince

Sergius. On the contrary, I have lately had reason to fancy that his desire for the alliance was subsiding."

"But that, dear mamna, would not give me an inclination to become the wife of Lord Elvinston."

"That might not. But his enormous wealth—his princely rank—his parks—his diamonds—"

"His tediousness—his awkwardness—his anathetic unamusability!—" "If, as you suppose, he is desirous to offer you his hand, you have no right to complain of his apathy. That he is well-informed and sensible, no one-not even Ida in the height of her scorn, ever denied; and a girl in your position, Marguerite, dependent in her own person and in that of her brother on the bounties of the emperor-

It was the first time the baroness had ever hazarded so much in my presence; and she now seemed conscious of her indiscretion, for she

stopped short.

"The emperor's kindness has never yet failed us," replied Marguerite, with more firmness than I had expected from her timid nature; "and it is surely less ignominious to be indebted for one's prosperity to the country which my father served so zealously, than to an interested

marriage with a foreigner."

The livid paleness that overspread Madame von Rehfeld's cheeks on hearing what appeared to be a premeditated allusion to her own fortunes in life, as twice the portionless bride of a foreigner, caused me to turn my eyes reproachfully towards Marguerite. But the serene expression of my sister's countenance convinced me that the words which had escaped her, bore reference solely to her own feelings. pass censure on the conduct of her mother, even in the most secret depths of her heart, appears so impossible to her pious nature, that I am convinced she never allowed herself, even with herself, to pass in review the position of her parents. Whether this be strength or weakness, let others determine. The disposition of Marguerite Erloff is so utterly different from my own, that I cannot sit in judgment on her. The English law is a good one. People should be tried by their peers.

To return, however, to our discussion. When it became clear to the baroness that her daughter, her portionless, dependent daughter, had rejected the hand of a man holding as brilliant a position in England as the Wolkonskys here, the Esterhazys at Vienna, or the Montmorencys in France, she became frantic; and like all people who allow themselves to go wild with passion, grievously injured her own cause. All the policy—it was so much, that I conclude it to be all, but perhaps it was only half,-which has been directing her manœuvres of the last few months, was betrayed to view; as if some showman in a fit of wantonness were suddenly to withdraw the curtain, and exhibit the wires

by which his puppets had been moved.

"You can scarcely be surprised, mother," pleaded Marguerite, "that I should have at once informed Lord Elvinston a marriage between us was impossible. In the first place, consider the difference of religion, for he is a Protestant!"

"Difference of religion," retorted Madame von Rehfeld. "Am I not as good a Catholic as yourself; was not your father of the Greek church? is not the Baron von Rehfeld of the Lutheran? Yet what disagree-

ments have you ever seen this produce between us?"

I, who am not debarred by the ties of nature from passing in review the conduct of this worldly woman, could not forbear ascribing something of her tractability on such points to her utter want of religion; since, were she the good Catholic she proclaims herself, she would not only be satisfied of the eternal perdition of both the lords she has sworn at the altar to love, honour, and obey, but bound to desire it.

"Besides," resumed Marguerite, unwilling to dispute on a topic so important, "I have never had reason to surmise you had altered your

intentions towards Prince Gallitzin."

"He may have altered his towards us."

"But, dearest mother, he is here as much as ever. Princess Prascovia

treats me as her sister, or rather as her child."

"Marguerite, Marguerite! When will you cease to be one, and to accept things and people in the broad light in which they present them selves? At eighteen, you are as simple as you were at eight! I was in hopes a Parisian education and the Hotel de Vaudreuil might have done something to make you reasonable, and fit to live in the world. But you had better have remained at St. Petersburg; for there you might at least have learned what reliance is to be placed upon—"

Again she stopped, conscious that she was going too far.

"I trust in goodness," she resumed, after a pause that seemed to embarrass her daughter as much as it excited my curiosity (but from the beginning of the conversation Marguerite had made me an imploring sign not to quit the room, as if aware that my presence would be some restraint upon her mother),—"I trust in goodness you may not have committed yourself so irretrievably as to render it impossible for me to renew the negotiations with this disinterested and amiable young man? As a suitor to Ida, I saw him in a different light. Ida is rich,—Ida is certain of a high alliance in her own country; and if she chose to espy defects or weaknesses in Lord Elvinston, it was no great matter. It never entered my head, that his lordship was capable of so generous a purpose as an alliance with you, or I should have requested our dear Ida to be less free in venting her charming caprices. But I am certain she will sofar oblige me as for the future to see in this young man only one whom I am desirous to make my son-in-law."

"Willingly, madam;" said I, rallying my courage, or rather my impertinence, in order to extricate Marguerite from her maternal grasp. "But I cannot pretend to act in concert with those of whose politics I am ignorant. I must have an accurate carte du pays laid down for me before I engage in the war. You say you wish Lord Elvinston to become your son-in-law. You hinted to me a fortnight ago a similar desire touching Prince Sergius Gallitzin. To how many husbands is Marguerite entitled by usage of the country? I was aware that polygamy prevailed among the Turks; I did not know that it held

good among the Russians."

Only yesterday, I should not have dared hazard anything so nearly amounting to an insult to the Baroness von Rehfeld. But I perceive that I have now an advantage over her; albeit of the nature and

amount of my advantage, I am still ignorant.

"In a matter of so much delicacy and difficulty as insuring an advantageous marriage to one who has no equivalent to tender in return," she observed, as meekly as if I had given utterance to the most courteous sentiments in the world, "it is impossible to be too cautious. An alliance with Prince Gallitzin was a thing I desired more than I hoped. I have now almost ceased to hope, and should be consequently happy beyond any ordinary measure of happiness to see my poor

Marguerite united to a man so every way deserving respect as him

whom the empress honoured with her hand last night.

I saw that Madame von Rehfeld was policizing; for this is the tone of circumlocution she involuntarily assumes in her petty diplomacy. But our conference was broken up by the sudden arrival of my father; and as he entered the room, she placed her finger on her lips to impose silence on us.

Several visitors being soon afterwards announced, I stole away to perform my promise of giving you an account of our English fête by this day's courier. Chère bonne! I flatter myself you will be somewhat

eager for my next letter!

#### Letter XVI.—From Marguerite Erloff to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

JUDGE, chère Mademoiselle, judge how little I must have enjoyed through life the blessings of friendship or relationship, when, in my moments of distress, I have recourse for comfort to you, with whom

my very acquaintance is only of a few months' date!

But saving the good Sœur Marie, under whose care I lived in my convent, you are the only person who has ever deigned to express much interest in my welfare; and your kindliness and caresses recur to me, and renew my gratitude, now that I am often unhappy. I cannot help hoping that in your heart I shall find some sympathy; and that you may even exercise the influence you must necessarily have over your charge, to induce Ida to become in truth a sister to one who seems to be friendless.

You can scarcely imagine a more loveless fate than mine! In my childhood, my father, who was of advanced years, was too much engrossed by his official duties to take the smallest heed of me; and from the moment when, just as I was beginning to feel with the feelings of thought, which are so different from the feelings of instinct, I was compelled to accompany my severe grandmother to Paris for my education; thenceforward, no more family love, no more family kindness! On meeting my mother again, after a lapse of so many years, I discovered, alas! only too soon, that a portionless child is, to a necessitous parent, a burden rather than a pleasure. I say not this complainingly. It is so. My mother cannot but have felt it as well as others.

But you know not, dear Mademoiselle Thérèse, how crushing is the feeling of being a burden in one's home; nay, to have no home,—to be a sufferance in the household of another. Baron von Rehfeld is too high-born and high-bred a gentleman to have made me a single instant aware of my position. But the hints of others apprize me that it is essential I should marry, in order to free his establishment from an incumbrance. My mother, Heavens knows, is better entitled than any other to exact such a sacrifice; for it was in order to release her family from the maintenance of a member the more, she gave her hand to one who nearly trebled her years, and who, I fear, presented little attraction to her feelings.

Such was the light in which, some months ago, a marriage with Sergius Gallitzin was placed before me,—and I was content. There

was nothing disagreeable in his person, nothing offensive in his manners, nothing objectionable in his character. I had then seen no one towards whom my heart inclined; and immediately after we arrived at Rehfeld, and he became our inmate, I assured my mother that whenever the question came to be discussed between them, she might rely on my obedience.

From that moment, I took pains to discover all the meritorious points of his disposition; and soon saw that if he were not calculated to create a passionate attachment, his calm and steadfast character must ever command respect. A life of routine, of duties carefully fulfilled, might be passed, with mutual regard, by his side. I esteemed myself fortunate

that no greater sacrifice was to be demanded of me.

But all this is changed, and I am most unhappy! The Englishman I described to you in such unsatisfactory colours, is to be my husband. While pretending attachment—for I still persist in declaring that he did pretend it—to my step-sister, it was myself who was the object of is love. He thought, I do not doubt, to throw me off my guard by establishing himself in the family under this false pretence. And he did so; for, convinced of his devotion to Ida, and pitying him for his unacceptability, I was always saying friendly things of him to the baron, my cousin Alfred, and others, which are now reproachfully repeated to me whenever I admit that I have a personal aversion to him. In short, dear Mademoiselle Thérèse, as I told you before, I am very

unhappy.

You know so many of our family secrets, that it is surely no treachery on my part to tell you more. My father's fortunes were left hopelessly embarrassed at his death; and as there seemed no chance of establishing my brother in his future career, except by keeping our name fresh in the memory of the emperor, my mother did her utmost-nay, more perhaps than was justifiable—in order to attain and retain a position at To persons living out of the world, an appointment such as hers seems to bring with it a shower of gold. So far, however, is this from the truth, that the salary was far from sufficient to meet the necessary expenses;-the reason probably that such places are usually conferred by the providence of the emperor upon persons of fortune. You can have no idea of the enormous expense entailed upon the ladies of the court by the empress's taste for dress. A degree of elegance and recherche is exacted of all who approach her, ruinous to such as have not the command of an imperial coffer, and injurious, it is whispered, even to them!

On my mother's return from Paris, she obtained the reputation, not very difficult perhaps of attainment, of being the best dressed woman in St. Petersburg. To maintain this in a circle where it is the custom to appear in three or four different dresses a day, and not be seen three or four times in the same (the empress, taking as much heed of the wardrobe of others, as most people of their own), has, I fear, embarrassed my poor mother to a degree that accounts at once for her own second marriage, and for the one she is desirous of arranging for

myself.

Dear Mademoiselle Thérèse, what will become of me?—I see I must marry Lord Elvinston; marry him, too, after having freely avowed to him that I do not love him!—I shall have to live in England; I, who, even in dear, warm, brilliant, sunshiny Paris, was ever sighing after my native country; and from all I have heard in former times from my cousin Alfred, of England and the English, methinks I would sooner lay my head at once beside that of my father in the vaults of the

Annunciation!

How shall I ever bear the coldness, dulness, and reserve of English people? For some time past, I have been looking forward to a happy domestic life with a man of calm nature and easy temper; who, I was assured by my mother, had the certainty of becoming a resident in Paris. There, I knew I should be happy. I should constantly have visited the good sisterhood who love me so dearly; and renewed my intimacy with my young friends of the convent, like myself established in the world. I could not but agree with mamma, that such a destiny was more likely to make me happy than the ceremonious life of the imperial court. Perpetual details of the toilet weary my very heart out and sooner would I have remained in my convent for life, than spend my days in devising changes of dress, and my nights in exhibiting them.

But though willing to quit St. Petersburg for cheerful, frank, inspiriting Paris, I feel that I should be weighed down by the monotony of English life; more ceremonious than that of Russia, and as remote from my

dear brother as that of France.

But I am satisfied I have no means of escape. The tone in which my mother has addressed me on the subject, convinces me that she means to be peremptory. The emperor, though he dislikes the union of the heirs or heiresses of our great Russian houses with foreigners, has no objection to extend the Russian connection with foreign aristocracies by marriages which convey no property out of his empire; and, alas! what would poor Marguerite Erloff take with her out of Russia, save a weak heart and feeble head? Not even the regrets of her friends—not even a rouble of inheritance!

It is grievous to me to know that, seeing this, I ought to be grateful for this young man's generosity. But oh! that he would only become more interested in his views, and seek among our Sheremetieffs and

Yousoupoffs, a more grateful and more suitable bride!

Write to me words of comfort, and to Ida words of counsel. Entreat her not to desert me at this trying moment. She has great influence with my mother. A person of her decided character has influence over all who approach her. Beg her—pray beg her—to stand my friend!

### Letter XVII.-From Viscount Elvinston to the Honourable Mrs. Leslie.

THE affectionate terms of your letter, dearest Mary, afford the strongest incentive to my compliance with the entreaty it conveys, that I will be perfectly candid with you concerning the interests that detain me here.

perfectly candid with you concerning the interests that detain me here. Trust me, I am so. To my guardian I do not feel bound to unfold the secrets of my heart. Enough for him if I unravel the workings of my mind. I send him as honest a summing up of my observations and opinions on Russia, as he furnished me of my property on the attainment of my majority. But as he then carefully abstained from expressing to me, as he did to my poor mother and others, his opinion that it would not tarry long in my hands, and that the proprietor of the Elvinston estates was less likely to do them honour than his predeces-

sors, I am exonerated from the frankness in matters of mere feeling, which might entitle him to give advice such as I should certainly hold

myself dispensed from following.

To whom am I responsible for my actions, Mary, beyond that universal social responsibility, which requires every man to comport himself according to the habits and usages of the class of life in which he is placed by providence? I owe it to my ancestors and successors that my family line should suffer no disruption in the respect of their countrymen, from the failure of a link in the chain of our succession, in my unworthy person. If I behave like a fool or a madman, to the discredit of the sober Lord Elvinstons who preceded me and created the honour of our name, I afford a fatal precedent to the Lords Elvinston who, I trust, will follow me, and bear our escutcheon nobly, in centuries to come.

I make these little observations, dear sister, in reply to your hints and remonstrances, with a view to your perfect reassurance. You are London-ridden, dear Mary! You cannot see your way beyond the hazy atmosphere of Park Lane! You are mounted so fiercely on your high-trotting horse of English supremacy, that you are somewhat too apt to run down such of your fellow-creatures as do not happen to

be also your fellow-countrymen.

Again, however, I say, reassure yourself! I am not going to commit any of the absurdities which the dowagers of your hum-drum coterie have persuaded you to apprehend. I am neither letting grow my beard, à la Russe;—nor am I a convert to the tenets of the Greek Church;—nor have I ordered a palisade with gilt arrow-heads for the glacis of Elvinston castle;—nor am I coming over in a droshka or a sledge, or disposed to inflict green oil or cabbage soup as the nutriment of my servants' hall. I can promise you that I am as essentially a John

Bull as at the period of leaving England.

Still, because I drew breath in latitude 51.30, I do not feel myself dismembered from the great family of my fellow-creatures; nor, because I reckon the longitude of my eastward brethren of Europe from the vulgar altitude of Greenwich Hill, do I esteem them the less my brethren. A charming woman is a charming woman, be her name Howard or Smith—Vaudreuil or Erloff. The cosmopolitism engendered by the civilization of modern times ought to defy the petty obstacles of frontiers and custom-houses. The same books are read in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. The arts, the sciences, see with the same eyes, and march nearly the same step, in those stirring capitals;—and whether the wife who secures my domestic happiness first saw the light on the shores of the Neva or those of the Thames, signifies very little to my family, provided her principles be those of a good Christian, and her deportment that of a good gentlewoman.

"I see how it is!" you exclaim. "He is preparing my mind for a foreign sister-in-law; a woman whose every thought and feeling will be

discordant with my own."

Console yourself, Mary. I have, I fear, very little chance of proving to you the groundlessness of your prejudices against a Russian wife. Would to heaven I thought it probable I should ever have occasion to hear you withdraw your protest against my Marguerite, whom you have presumed to judge unheard, unseen, unknown; and who has proved a still severer judge towards myself, whom she has heard, seen, known—and rejected!

Yes, Mary! The brother whom, in your partiality, you imagined so

great an object of attraction, has been utterly rejected by her whom you ungenerously conclude to be intent only on my captivation. Instead of the ardent desire to place herself at the head of a stately English establishment, which you London women attribute to all others over the globe, the very notion of a residence in England sufficed to decide her against me. Mademoiselle Erloff distinctly admitted that she should consider banishment to England as secondary only to banishment to Siberia!

Be pleased, therefore, to admit that part of your supposition, at least, as groundless. You tell me that I am marked out as a victim. I own it;—but it is because I am disdained, not because I am courted by

Marguerite Erloff.

You will probably he surprised that the letter conveying this admission, should be still dated from St. Petersburg. Let this suffice in evidence of the reality of my attachment! I have been in love before. Most men, if they told the truth, would admit that from their boyhood, they had always some object of preference. But I never before felt disposed to surrender myself, bound hand and foot, to the object of my love. I never felt that I could abandon my destinies into her hands. I never made her an offer of mine;—and if in the enthusiasm of momentary passion I had done so, as now, and been as now refused, I would instantly have fled from the spot. My love would have been converted into hatred, and I should have revenged my disappointment, even upon myself.

My feelings towards Marguerite are worlds apart from this frantic excitement. My love for her is good and holy as herself. If I thought her attached to another, and could prosper her attachment, I would do so; for her happiness is dearer to me than my own. But I believe her aversion to me to be purely personal. She dislikes my looks, my manners, my nation, my language;—she dislikes me by the force of the same prejudices which make you dislike her. But such antipathies, as

I need not remind you, are not irrevocable.

Instead, therefore, of flying from her in despair—I remain. It were happiness enough for me to enjoy her society, even if I enjoyed it hopeless. But I confess that I am looking forward to the chances I may obtain of diminishing, by steadfast devotion, the distastes I have

perhaps provoked by precipitancy.

You, dear Mary, so proud in your own person, and so doubly proud in that of your brother, will revolt against this tameness. Though subscribing to the usual maxim, that "Love is a universal conqueror," you would fain exempt Pride from his tributaries. My dear sister! the love which cannot subjugate this foible of poor human nature, is indeed a weakling; and in opposition to the usual device of Cupid mounted on a lion, methinks I shall adopt that of a Cupid astride on a hyena, as the blazon of my knightly shield.

So much in answer to your earnest entreaties to me to return and take my seat in parliament, instead of wasting my time in foreign countries. I am not, I trust, wasting my time here. I should waste it in parliament. I am at present unqualitied in opinions or even feelings, for my task as a legislator. Extending the principle of Bacon, that "he who hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune," I feel it indispensable to have taken my place in my own family seat, and established myself as a member of English society, before I arraign to myself

my privilege of peerage as a lawgiver of the Upper House.

Were I, dear Mary, as you desire, to establish myself with all my

present crudity of mind in my place in parliament, heaven knows with what heterodox notions I might be tempted to insult the names of our Whig forefathers! I who, at Harrow, was so enthusiastic a lover of liberty as to make old Butler's blood run cold on divers occasions, am now almost in love with despotism. I promise you that I never witnessed the popular emotion of loyalty till I came to Russia; and am beginning to believe that the right of exclaiming,

Off with his head-so much for Buckingham!

is the surest passport of a sovereign to the hearts of his subjects.

If you could only witness the enthusiasm excited by the emperor wherever he appears! The army adores him—the populace worship. The nationality of the Russians amounts to bigotry; the feeling having been well knouted into the nation by the founders of the empire, conscious how potent a spell was required to bind together in unity provinces opposed in climate, temperament, habits, and usages, as the extremes of all the Russias. The tree, however, by whatever libations of blood and tears it may have been watered, has taken root and fructified; and I am willing to bear testimony that, however stupendous the growth of loyalty in the land of freedom, the ardour with which the Russian anthem of "Boje Zara Chrani" is received by the Mougiks of Muscovy, might be backed against the "God save the King" of the free people of Great Britain.

I believe Nicholas I. to be an excellent emperor; intrepid, haughty, passionless, or at all events (so far resembling his own Neva, whose furious waves, under the control of a still more potent element, are reduced to subjection by intensity of frost) that his passions are as much under his government as all the other subordinates of his autocracy.

Still, I cannot conceive him to be so faultless as to justify the idolatry that attends him. It is not, of course, till the Naslednik or heir apparent of to-day becomes the czar of to-morrow, and the name of his predecessor the property of history as legitimately as his body that of the imperial vault in the fortress, that impartiality takes his character in hand. Even then, there is a certain degree of servility even among the educated classes of Russia, inseparable from the condition of an empire "pourri avant d'être mur," which, as surely as worms and creeping things innumerable are engendered by physical corruption, forbids all frank consideration of the Scythian Cæsar. The same intense loyalty which enabled the Russians, high and low, to kiss the blood-stained and vice-polluted hand of Catherine, and salute her by the holy name of mother, or to hail the vain and effeminate Alexander as one of the greatest heroes of his time, may be supposed to exercise a scarcely less miraculous influence at the present day. The young, vain, and frivolous princess of Prussia became a divinity from the moment she assumed the pavoinik, and became mother of their future czar: nay, there can be little doubt that, had the wretched Constantine ascended, or that were the rugged Michael now to ascend the imperial throne, Zara Chrani" would be sung for them as vociferously as for other sovereigns of their line. The sovereigns who perish in Russia perish by the conspiracy of the nobles, not by an outbreak of the people. If, therefore, we insist so strenuously, by way of taunt to the Yankees, upon the loveliness of our English passion of loyalty, how much greater that of the Russians, whose magnitude covers a thousand fold as many imperial sins, and swallows a million fold as many camels!

But I am exceeding the limits of your patience. If you have wit to discover, dear Mary, that the political and moral bone I have thrown you and Leslie to pick, purports, in the guise of the mutilated tail of Alcibiades' dog, to distract your attention from the preceding contents of my letter—keep my secret, and spare the tenderness of my self-love! I will shortly write again. Heaven send it may be in a happier and more natural strain.

#### Letter XVIII.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to the Countess Auguste.

Many years ago, chère tante, when you used to be as indulgent towards a wilful boy as you now are towards a wayward man, I remember inquiring of you by what sheet-anchor your courage had been so admirably sustained throughout those storms of the Revolution, which left the house of Vaudreull a wreck on the shore. I expected that my uncle, who was present, would reply "Philosophy!"—while from you (the Abbé Chaptal being also present), I anticipated for answer-" RE-LIGION!"

I was disappointed! For once you were unanimous.

"I fear, my dear child," was your honest reply, "that what you may have been taught to reverence as fortitude, was a less laudable qualifi-We submitted to the storm, like the reed, instead of resisting like the oak. Frivolity, Alfred,—Frivolity is as ready a comforter as Philosophy! We had not the heart to be miserable."

"But the loss of your habitual society," said I, "banishment from

your home-your country!"

"A citizen of the world finds his home in every country," said my

uncle.

"Between ourselves, Alfred," you rejoined, "my comfort under our misfortune was the necessity of visiting foreign courts. I was sick to death of Paris. We had exhausted all that Versailles could do for our entertainment. We were weary of seeing the same faces, and hearing the same voices; and, for the moment, the excitement of change was delightful.

Then did the dear old Abbé break in with his truisms about carrying with us our country in the peace of our own souls, and hearing our native accents in the language of those we love-etcetera, etcetera,

etcetera!

And lo! the salon of the Hotel de Vaudreuil became for once agreed in opinion, that nationality is a vulgar prejudice, and that the aristocracies of all the countries in Europe are of one and the same nation; seeing that millionnaires must be essentially French, whether born in Paris, London, Berlin, Naples, or St. Petersburg!

"People of rank and fortune eat, drink, dress, dance, and talk French, all over the world!" was your ultimatum, as it is that of your obedient

humble nephew.

Chère tante! I trust you remain of the same opinion. For I have set my heart and soul, such as they are—for the existence of the latter I doubt, and of the former I deny-upon uniting my dear little cousin Marguerite to a man who will give her trois cent mille francs de rentes by way of jointure, and a third of the sum pour ses épingles, on condition of her putting up with a baronial castle on the Clyde, a stately mansion in Yorkshire, and an excellent house in Piccadilly; not for the rest of her days, we trust, but for the rest of his. Should she survive him, she might carry her jointure, diamonds, and gentle nature to the paradise of the Faubourg St. Germain—or the purgatory of St. Petersburg—or where she would, or will.

What say you, chère tante? Is not this an excellent match for a

little girl without a livre of fortune?

I cannot but fancy it will come to pass; because Marguerite is so obstinately and groundlessly set against the hero of my romance, that everybody makes common cause in defending him; and because Elvinston himself stands ill-usage with the patience of a saint or a donkey. She will be encouraged to cuff and kick him till, some day, the self-recriminations of a generous temper prompt her to atone for her fault

by a double share of amenity.

I will not swear, however, that I have no worse motive than cousinly affection in promoting the marriage. The baron's daughter will hardly find fortitude to behold Marguerite become a wealthy British peeress, and figure at the brilliant court of George IV., while she is fated to live and die as she was born, daughter, wife, mother, of petty barons of the empire. I confess I am out of patience with her presumptuous pretensions. One knows not whether to laugh or weep at the little freaks of hauteur assumed by this spoiled beauty of Schloss Rehfeld! If I can in some degree bring her to her senses by the glorification of her step-sister, by and by, we shall find her become a reasonable creature.

I am getting into better conceit with St. Petersburg. There is more going on here than at first meets the eye; and the process of initiation is diverting enough. Not that I either like or admire the tone of the place, whether enjoyed en prince or en polisson. Did you ever observe, towards the close of a party prolonged beyond the reasonable limit of enjoyment, how every one assumes false spirits, and becomes restless and noisy, in order to keep himself awake? So is it here! The Russian capital is so insupportably dull, that people are obliged to commit twice as great excesses as elsewhere, in order to prove themselves wide awake. There cannot be a stronger proof of the prevalence of ennui, than that those who wish to provide amusement for personages whose pleasures must be bought ready made, such as the princes and magnates of the land, produce it in the garb of buffoonery. Grotesque masquerades, in which fat old Stanislas Potocki figures as a belle, and the lovely Zavadoska as a monster, constitute one of the refined divertissements of the court; to say nothing of the public masked balls, which are beginning to emulate those of Paris of the olden time. I always notice that it serves to indicate a nation having drained the cup of dissipation to the lees, and become blase with decent enjoyment, when masquerading begins to constitute a popular pastime!

Many things are wanting in St. Petersburg, the absence of which compels one to have recourse to desperate pleasures—clubs, to begin with. The two or three that exist are of English origin degenerated into Russian, and millions of versts below the standard of the charming Travellers' and Crockford's, which impart so much zest to the sojourn of foreigners in London. In the next place, les coulisses; or rather DES coulisses where emperors and grand dukes do not attend rehearsals, and put an officer under arrest for a button more or less on his uniform

when paying his devoirs to the corps de ballet.

Apropos to uniforms, I agree with you that this place is charmingly redeemed from the monotony of London and Paris—I was going to say of the capitals of Europe—for I regard Russia as more than half Asiatic, by the picturesque costume of the lower classes, and the soldiership of the higher. All true descriptions of the Russian capital ought to begin—

Arms and the man I sing:

for the emperor, and the daily and hourly soldiering of his metropolitan garrison, constitute three-fourths of St. Petersburg.

To be food for powder is here really a distinction. Military rank has everywhere precedence. Ten to one but your tailor and hat-maker are soldiers; or, if not, the infant grand duke or czarovitz, is one; arrayed in jack-boots from his swaddling-clothes, and put through his exercise as hetman of the Cossacks by his imperial father, from the moment he can stand alone, for the delight of mobs of his admiring, or . at least applauding subjects. But all this serves to variegate the throng; and between the tributary tribes of the far eastern and due southern Russian provinces, and the be-hussar-ment of Russia proper, the theatres and the promenades exhibit a motley surface far more amusing than the eternal broad-cloth of civilized Paris. A single Armenian would draw a mob on the Boulevarts. I must needs add, though reluctantly, that, independent of their flowing beards and picturesque kaftans, the men are fine manly-looking fellows, and in deportment uniformly courteous. The green fish-oil in which they take delight, appears to exercise singular power of unctification over their manners. The women may be fine manly-looking fellows too, for aught I know, for one sees nothing of them.

I cannot help sometimes contrasting my position here with the month I spent in England last year, previous to the carnival. For the self-sacrifice of quitting Paris for these expeditions into the wilderness, I had of course sufficient motives; i. e., my weakness for horses, and my weakness for women. Melton and the Lily of Rehfeld have to answer

for thus betraying me out of the sphere of civilized life.

But the grossièreté of England is utterly different from that of Russia. In England, it is the coarseness of the individual, here the coarseness of the nation, that shocks your feelings; because in the former the result of enlightenment, and here, of the reverse. All that eight centuries have done for the English since we conquered and humanized them, giving them laws and cooks to replace their hips, haws, and acorns, and skins and manners of beasts, has been to render them intensely selfish; to promote the study of the comfortable in all its branches, and enable them to make spring snuffers and elastic armchairs. As regards the Arts, they are little forwarder than when we built their cathedrals and founded their Westminster Hall. Their palaces, their galleries, their theatres, their pastimes, are such as would provoke the mockery of a student of the Pays Latin and his grisette!

In Russia, on the contrary, where the founders of the Empire seem to have taken pleasure in looking through the wrong end of the telescope, rendering the objects near them of preponderating importance and reducing remote ones to nothingness, the comfort of the people is disregarded, while palaces, galleries, academies, and theatres abound and prosper. Two of the uninhabited palaces here, the Taurida and Marble palace, exceed anything I saw in England, while the Winter Palace,

Hermitage, and Tzarsko-çelo, might take their place side by side with our own stately Tuileries and Versailles.

Still, il y a disparate! The magnificent quays of the Neva are of granite, the pavement of the streets of wood; and though wood pavement on a solid foundation may be an admirable causeway, when fluctuating upon a swamp, and a swamp subjected to cruel alternations of frost, thaw, and drought, it is a thing to try the patience even of an istvoshtnik.

It is not, however, between the muddy streets of the two capitals, as contrasted with our excellent pavé, that I would institute comparisons. The contrast of their domestic life is the thing that excites my hourly

amusement.

In England, the machinery is all of iron—in Russia, bones and Here, Mougiks are less expensive than bell-wires; while in Great Britain, flesh and blood are valued, as if meted by a Shylock at so much per pound. Every great Russian house maintains whole regiments of menials, who start up from every corner. To be sure, there are nearly as many in those of England. But there, like the savage tribes, they address one only though their chief; and according to the humane practice of the most philanthropical and slave-tradeabolishing people of the dampest country in Europe, the subordinates are kept in subterranean caverns, where they are subject to a species of prison discipline. The items of populace one is always stumbling over here, are kept wholly out of sight in the land whose dining-rooms provide comfort for the outward, rather than the inward man of the guests. In other communities one dines well, and is ill at ease during In England they labour by the warmth of Turkey the operation. carpets and luxury of well-stuffed morocco chairs, to make one insensible to the hardness of their meat and coldness of their soup.

In St. Petersburg most things are done with the prodigality of semibarbarism. The most considerable Russian fortunes have arisen out of favouritism, gambling, or jobbery; and estates are bought, sold, and exchanged with the vulgar facility of people who have neither emblazonments nor title-deeds to fetter their proceedings, and in whose ears the crusade of Christendom have a sound all but fabulous. There is of course less shame in the extravagance and ruin that alienate no ancestral inheritance, and cut down no oaks of the days of Philip

Augustus or the Plantagenets.

Meanwhile, laud we the etiquettes of France, which preserve our fêtes of the Faubourg from the onerous presence of royalty; for so dead a weight, both on the purse and guests of an entertainer, can scarcely be imagined! When the divinities of old condescended to dine or sup with humble mortals, they used to convert cabins into palaces, in guerdon for their entertainment; but when czars and czarinas prove equally affable, their visits are far more likely, and far more apt, to reduce their hosts from a palace to a hovel!

Every object of real luxury consumed in Russia is still of such exotic origin as to cost its weight in gold, Nectar and ambrosia might be had. I should imagine, at little more than the expense of champagne and pâté de Strasbourg, which are expected to abound on every well-conditioned table; while, such is the severity of the climate, that the early fruits. I find, are forced at the cost of two louis d'ors a peach, and a

crown a cherry!

In Paris we rarely do these exorbitant things, unless when a Demidoff

or a Tufiakin settles among us. The gilding on our surface is equable. We do not patch our gold on a single point of the structure, leaving the rest with the bare deal boards visible, or bedaubed with ochre. Our moderate fortunes, limited, moreover, by the responsibilities of ancient descent, render it impossible for us to create palaces and people them with the population of a village, in order to entertain a king and queen. who would laugh at us for our pains, as we do at the parvenu bankers, who lay down footcloths of velvet and bridges of gold, to allure us to their fêtes.

And now, chère tante, I must go and hear what account poor Elvinston has to give of a visit he was to pay last night to the baroness. Adieu, therefore, and trust in all security the fortunes of your grand-daughter to my Talleyrandic statesmanship.

# Letter XIX.—From Ida von Rehfeld to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

I VENTURED to ask you, chère bonne, in one of my first letters from St. Petersburg, why you and others had cruelly suffered me to attain such preposterous misconceptions of my personal consequence. I now inquire, with equal sincerity, how you could let me rely so implicitly on my own discernment and strength of mind?

At eighteen I fancied myself an oracle, able to decide my own destinies and those of others. At eighteen and a quarter I avow myself the dupe of my own prophecies. It is some proof of my progress in wisdom that, for the first time, I am growing sensible of my folly.

You may remember how positively I foretold Marguerite's marriage with Prince Gallitzin, and how persuaded I was of Lord Elvinston's devotion to myself—so positively, indeed, that I can hardly expect you to grant me your faith when I now announce, that within two months my quiet little step-sister will be the wife of a British peer who is one of

the wealthiest subjects in Europe.

Madame von Rehfeld, with her usual cool easy manner of taking possession of people, had no sooner discovered his consequence, than she wound herself round his thoughts and feelings, in a way to deceive him into a belief that all the attentions and kindnesses lavished upon him by herself proceeded from Marguerite. Installing him among us as one of the family, she threw the shy man so thoroughly off his guard, that he was never happy out of her house. How can I tell, in fact, that the frequent visits of which she was always complaining, were not, in the first instance, provoked by herself, to promote such an intimacy between the English lord and her daughter, on pretence of his devotion to me, as must eventually end in their marriage?

For, after all, let the disinclination of Marguerite be what it may, provided Lord Elvinston choose to persevere, in a marriage it is sure to end. The authority of the baroness over her daughter is absolute. The recent diplomatic differences, concerning the navigation of the Oder, occupy my father's whole attention; and were it otherwise, he has lately acquired very feudal opinions concerning the extent of parental authority. As to Marguerite, the docility of her nature is angelic; for I now admit that her gentleness is not, as I thought at first, the result of stupidity. Marguerite is as quick of feeling as clear of thought. In

all her sacrifices duty is the presiding divinity of the altar.

She has never yet seen Lord Elvinston a moment alone, so that genuine explanations between them are impossible; and under the influence of Madame von Rehfeld, her deportment towards him has become so deferential, that the poor man, willing to grasp at a straw, is contented to hope on, since to love on, contented or not, appears inevitable.

Thus cheered and encouraged, his reserve and awkwardness are gradually disappearing. In the beginning he was embarrassed by consciousness of his passion; but now, the rubicon being passed, and his bosom unburthened of its secret, he is becoming at ease. To tell the whole truth, he has gained immensely by redemption from the persiftage with which, so long as I fancied him an admirer of my own, I felt justified in attacking him, which was in a great measure the cause of his mauvaise honte; and, to do him justice, in any other light than a lover, I find him a pleasant companion, and an addition to our society.

From all this, chère bonne, you will infer that the bristles of my amour propre are smoothed down again, and that I have resigned myself to the force of circumstances. Better still, I am perfectly satisfied with the position I have achieved. It is not that which I had anticipated—

it is not that which I desired—but I am satisfied.

Your friend, Princess W—, came to see me the other day, at an hour when the baroness was sure to be absent from home. She chose to return my visit, she said, au pied de la lettre, and insisted upon sitting with me in my own sanctum, instead of the saloon into which she had been ushered; the consequence was a most unceremonious examination

of my books, drawings, and music.

"My dear little Madame Dacier, you are a miracle!" cried she, after turning over my library. "I now see why you were so strenuous in your endeavours to restrict me to the ceremoniousness of the state apartments. Quite right, my dear! If you love yourself, let not another woman in St. Petersburg set foot over the threshold of your temple of the Muses. There would be an end at once to your hopes and prospects here, were it known that, instead of band-boxes and jewel-cases, your dressing-room was full of busts, quartos, and portfolios. Though no people in Europe assign greater importance to education than the Russians, or pester themselves more actively to render their children modern linguists (aware that our hitherto uncultivated and barbarous dialect is as much a dead language for the rest of Europe as those in which I have just discovered your disgraceful proficiency) anything like information or valuable acquirement is scouted among us as pedantry. To succeed at the imperial court, ma belle rêveuse, you must devote yourself to the science of brocades and satins, laces and ribbons. To distinguish between geology and mineralogy is considered the province of a governess; while, not to discriminate between Mechlin and Valenciennes would banish you to Siberia."

Of course, I know how to make allowances for her spirit of exaggeration. But it was not the first time I had listened to an accusation attested by the respect conceded at St. Petersburg to the accomplishments for which the present empress is so remarkable, of dressing and dancing; while the two highly cultivated princesses of Wirtemberg, fated to become the wives of the Emperor Paul and his son Michael, have had double reason to lament the apportionment of their destinies in the little value assigned to their mental superiority. Nevertheless, Russia made a fair exchange with Wirtemberg, in an accomplished queen, the daughter of Paul and sister of the grand duke, whose early

death, I find, is still lamented at Stutgardt, as that of one of the most remarkable women of modern times. To return, however, to Prin-

cess W--

"If I had not forced my way into your blue chamber this morning," she resumed, "I should have been puzzled much more and much longer, to comprehend the policy of your step-mother. That she had some excellent motive for dropping Sergius Gallitzin and making up to that raw English youth, who they say is as rich as Yousoupoff and Demidoff united, I entertained no doubt; but I took her policy upon trust. I now see through it all! She perceived that her pretty Marguerite had no chance with a hard-headed man like Gallitzin, who wants a fellow-labourer with him in the paths of preferment, not a helpless doll to sit by the fire and tell her beads,—against a girl of spirit, energy and talent, like the one whose abilities have been cultivated by one of the initiated of the Hôtel de Choisy. Seeing that you were the very wife for him, and that the very husband for Marguerite had presented himself, she made an exchange of prisoners, as people do on the ratification of a treaty—et voilà!"

"Do you mean, then," said I, smiling, "that I am to be disposed of to a needy diplomat of half a century's experience, without so much as my

own leave asked in the arrangement?"

"Madame von Rehfeld has never been in the habit of asking people's leaves to dispose of them. She married your father almost without his consent—she will do as much by you;—and some day or other, after you have been six months Princess Sergius Gallitzin, you will inquire

of yourself how it all came about."

"I rather think not!" was the reply. "I am not so easily bought, sold, or exchanged, as the gentle Marguerite. I am not blinded by filiad duty. My nature partakes of the briar rather than the rose. I am really on my guard, and able to fight for it. I see for myself, and feel for myself; and if unable to act for myself, at least will not act according to the dictation of others. If not independent in conduct, I am inflexible in mind."

The princess replied by a provoking laugh. "Brava, bravissima!" cried she, "my sturdy little heroine of eighteen! Admit, however, that considering the clearsightedness on which you pride yourself, you ran headforemost into the trap laid for you the other night, when the bait

was stamped with an imperial crown?"

"I scarcely understand you!" said I, piqued by her tone of irony.

"I mean that we of the Michaëloff set were perfectly prepared for all that took you by surprise at the ball of the British Ambassador! Next to marrying of Marguerite, the baroness's dearest object is to settle her step-daughter out of the way; and it is of course her object to do so in a manner calculated to extend her family connexions."

"But what influence has the notice of the emperor towards promoting the marriage of the daughter of one of the foreign envoys at his

court?" said I, proudly.

"Everything—when the future bridegroom is a court favourite, like Sergius Gallitzin. It is well known in our coterie, that very soon after your arrival here, that is, very soon after Lord Elvinston was seen to pay his court to Marguerite Erloff, Madame von Rehfeld began to hint in strictest confidence to her friends (the surest method of circulating reports), that the education to which Mademoiselle von Rehfeld had been exposed in Germany, was worthier of her maternal

than of her paternal descent; and that she could better pretend to a professor's chair at Leipzig, than the honours of a ball-room."

I fear I was not so much mistress of my emotions, as to prevent a sudden blush from betraying the irritation I experienced at this

announcement.

"The thing told as she intended; for when did one of Madame Erloff's coups & état fail of effect? Attention was attracted towards the weak or strong point, to which she desired to attract attention. The fine ladies shrugged their shoulders in disgust. Such of the Anitschkoff court as took the trouble of thinking about you at all, set you down as a little bore, to be strictly avoided. But a few—a very few, including the Michaëloffskians and the emperor—experienced some curiosity to behold the German savante so little favoured by nature with the usual charms of her sex, as to have found it necessary to take refuge in professional pedantry.

"Figure to yourself, therefore, their surprise when the lily of Rehfeld unfolded its petals, and they perceived that the most accomplished girl in St. Petersburg was also the prettiest!—The empress's hundred maids of honour turned pale with envy; and no one was surprised when the czar, who joins the dance only as a sort of annual penance, selected you as a partner. I am told (but being no intriguante am little in the court secrets), that the surprise of Nicholas at finding the new beauty an agreeable unaffected companion, was secondary only to the amazement he had experienced at finding the profoundly scholastic daughter of the

new envoy the loveliest ornament of his court."

"It strikes me," said I, striving to speak with composure, "that if the Baroness von Rehfeld were inclined to speculate on the emperor's notice for any member of her family, it would have been for her own daughter rather than for one to whom she owes nothing, and who owes

nothing to her."

"Absurd, my dear! Marguerite is no lily of Rehfeld,—but is the very type of the flower whose name she bears; and who ever heard of a daisy intermingled with crown jewels? Scentless, colourless, it is worthy only to exhibit its pallid unmeaning star on the domestic lawn; while the more queenly flower derives lustre from the diadem as well as imparts it."

"I trust I do not understand you!" was my haughty rejoinder.
"You would scarcely, I imagine, imply that my father's wife intends to promote an intimacy between me and the emperor of a discreditable nature?"

Again did the princess reply by a provoking burst of laughter. I am

persuaded she scarcely thought me in my senses!

"How ill must you have employed your time during your sojourn here, fair Ida," said she, "to be ignorant that the Venus de Medicis, fendowed with the softness of the graces and accomplishments of the muses (forgive me if I become classical during my séance in your learned boudoir), might vainly level her attractions at the frozen heart of the emperor; no not frozen—though I dislike him, let me render him justice—the virtuous heart of the emperor. Do not smile—do not mistrust me! I am not a Madame Erloff—I am no imperial flatterer. But it is an incontestable truth that Nicholas is a devoted husband and father, and fortunately inaccessible to the weaknesses so fatal to the domestic happiness of his elder brother."

"I did not suppose you were accusing the baroness of a design alto-

gether so culpable as your words imply," said I; the name and beauty of Alexander's Madame Narischkin recurring to my mind. have all read in history of a monarch equally virtuous, equally cold, having been subjected to a bond of friendship as potent over his feelings as that of love over the hearts of other men. We have all heard of

Louis XIII. and Mademoiselle de la Fayette."

"Ay, and prettily their friendship ended; -by sending one into a convent, and the other into a grave !- Is not that the Genlis namby-pambyfication of the affair?—But in that line, belle Ida, you are forestalled. If Nicholas require, at any moment, wiser companionship than he finds at home,—if in certain dilemmas for the regulation of female etiquette and feminine pretension, it becomes indispensable to consult the tact of a woman who possesses mind and heart, in addition to an elegant tournure and distinguished manners—his utmost wants are satisfied at the Michaeloff Palace, in the gentle kinswoman of his mother, and wife of his brother. Our grand-duchess possesses all the influence to which, by consanguinity and superiority, she is entitled."
"Explain yourself, then," cried I. "What is the motive to which you

would ascribe the desire of Madame von Rehfeld to promote my

acquaintance with his imperial majesty?"

Do not talk so like an imperial majesty yourself, or I will not answer another question!"-exclaimed the princess, bantering me out of my ill-assumed dignity; and eager as I was to obtain some insight into the truth, you may guess whether I complied with her exactions.

"My simple belief is this," said she, after some further persuasion.

"Madame von Rehfeld has, we know, a son and daughter to establish in life, and debts to pay, we suspect, beyond her means of payment. The favour of the emperor can alone accomplish these objects; and how is it to be obtained? She is aware that he personally dislikes her; or rather, that he tolerates her only as the widow of a faithful servant of his brother. Neither Marguerite nor Alexis Erloff are qualified to recommend themselves to his favour; the girl being a nullity-the boy a turbulent incumbrance. It is, therefore, indispensable to her to form a more advantageous connexion with the good will of the sovereign, on whose notice their fortunes depend. In giving to his favourite, Sergius Gallitzin, a rich and intelligent wife, she is performing a feat highly agreeable to the emperor; and to persuade the prince of the wisdom of such an alliance, cannot attempt a better stratagem than to obtain for you the notice and commendations of the czar. Do you now see your way through her manœuvres?"

"In plain words, you mean that, finding she has secured a good parti for Marguerite, she wishes me to become Princess Gallitzin," said I,

"A Princess Gallitzin, the influence of whose talents and beauty may extend that of Russia in foreign courts, as much as it will fortify that of her Russian connexions at home," persisted the princess, without hesitation.

"I conclude I am to accept all this as a compliment," said I. "But forgive me if I accuse you of a poor one to the merits or attractions of your Russian ladies, in fancying those of a little obscure German girl

"Not of subverting the laws of an empire, à la Roxalane, my dear," interrupted the gay princess, "but of affording an agreeable accessory to the friendship of the emperor for one of his most distinguished servants. No one has more reason than Nicholas to appreciate the value of dignity and àplomb in combination with youth and beauty. Everything done, said, or left undone and unsaid, by his subjects in foreign courts, is fully known to him; and he is never more displeased than when he hears of our committing ourselves and our country by an escapade. It is on that very account I am obnoxious to him. Because, a year or two ago, I chose to amuse myself at Rome as Romans do, it was signified to me that it might be all the better for my estates if I returned to Russia. Hard enough!—for what could he do worse to me than bid me return to Russia?—However, it is of you, not myself we are talking; and I am as well convinced as the baroness, that the emperor would be all the more disposed to bestow a high diplomatic appointment on Prince Gallitzin, if in possession of a rich, wise, witty, and pretty wife."

I was about to protest against the probability of his making the acquisition in my person, but the princess would not allow me to say a

word.

"Do not commit yourself by rash vows, which you may, at some future moment, wish unsworn!" said she. "You cannot yet have taken your resolve. Your position with your father's wife may not always be so agreeable as at this moment. Between them dissensions may arise, when Baron von Rehfeld becomes better acquainted with her conduct and motives. If still blinded to her disposition, if she even manage to disentangle herself from her embarrassments without involving him, in losing Marguerite you lose the charm of your circle and consolation of your home.—Nicht wahr?—Monsieur de Vaudreuil?—(I fancied that my adroit companion eyed me scrutinizingly as she spoke) "will not be here for ever; and simply as a third person, domesticated with your father and step-mother and the Saxon cousin I have heard of, pour tout potage, as a suitor, you will scarcely find St. Petersburg very attractive."

"You offer a far from enchanting picture to counterbalance the pleasures of diplomatic distinction in one of the great capitals!" said!" said to day, it is as essential to be Russian born as, a few years ago, it was to be of foreign extraction. It is not for me to decide whether my ruling weakness be vanity or pride. But either one or the other is the cause that a long residence here, in utter neglect, would be still more disagreeable than the vexations to which I foresee myself likely to

become exposed by the emperor's notice."

The princess, finding that our interview was taking a graver turn than she intended, recalled me to lighter topics by the discussion of all the recent news she had received from your friends, the Choisys. Your belle élève is creating the greatest sensation, she tells me, as Madame la Marquise de Montécourt,—the observed of all observers, and the last

new plaything of the Duchesse de Berri.

From this subject, she diverged to Paris in general; the cheerfulness and spirit whereof she described in terms so glowing beyond all I ever heard on the subject from yourself, that, for full half an hour after her departure, I was as well disposed to accept the hand of poor Prince Gallitzin, for the chance of representing the court of all the Russias at that of the Tuileries, as the baroness herself could have desired!

that of the Tuileries, as the baroness herself could have desired!

I am called away. Marguerite's voice at the door—hoarse with

emotion. What on earth can have happened?

In our family confusion of yesterday, chère bonne, there was no time

for closing this packet and delivering it to the courier. You must, therefore, be content to receive a week later a despatch of double

length.

I told you that I was called away by Marguerite Erloff, in a state of great agitation; and really feared that some new incident in the Elvinston affair was distracting her poor heart. Far from it! It was the arrival of her brother Alexis which had produced the tears of joy I was stupid enough to mistake, at first sight, for tears of anguish.

On our arrival in the baroness's saloon, I found seated there, a very tall, very military, very handsome young man; who scarcely rose on my entrance, and whose scrutinizing examination of me from head to foot on our introduction, was anything but conciliating. The young count accosted me precisely as if the names of Erloff and Rehfeld were strangers to each other. Handsome as he is, I never saw a less prepossessing person!

At the moment of receiving his cold and almost haughty salutation, it suddenly occurred to my mind, that perhaps his impression of my father's daughter had been conceived from the communications of Marguerite on first reaching Schloss Rehfeld; when, alas! she had

little cause to describe me in partial terms.

Scarcely had our unpromising acquaintance commenced, when Count Erloff resumed with his mother the conversation my appearance had interrupted, which bore reference solely to their own affairs, and the management of the Erloff estates. I had consequently ample opportunity to examine my new step-brother; and exercised it in the same

morose spirit which he had betrayed towards myself.

The first thing that struck me in his exterior was his resemblance to the emperor. This observation says wonders in his favour, even to exBussian ears; for Nicholas is, unquestionably, one of the finest men who ever ascended a throne. But in St. Petersburg, it is to proclaim him a demi-god. Nevertheless, the cold dignity so becoming an imperial diadem is equally inappropriate to the cordialities of private life; and though the eye of Alexis Erloff has a merely icy expression, the lines of the mouth threaten to deepen from coldness into ferocity. As I contemplated his forbidding physiognomy, there involuntarily occurred to my mind the idea of the lawless Russian noble, as exemplified in the dark mysteries of the castles of Oranienbaum and St. Michael, the destinies of Peter III. and Paul I. After all, however, it is impossible to base any rational judgment on mere physiognomy; and even our visionary country soon learned to repudiate Lavater.

The debate upon family business between the mother and son was so unreasonably prolonged, that at last, I began to be almost angry with Marguerite for having summoned me to be an auditress of what so little concerned me. But on turning towards her with an almost repreachful glance, I found her eyes fixed with such infatuated fondness upon this only brother, while tears stood upon her cheeks and repressed emotion quivered in every feature, that I could not find courage for even an angry look. At that moment, believe me, she was surpassingly

beautiful!

After a time the baroness herself strove to include me in the conversation, and render it general; but the count was evidently of opinion that I was of no more importance than the chair I sat on; and after a hurried and impatient glance while I replied to his mother's question, resumed the subject of his acres and Mongiks, and their administration.

If such be the breeding of the noble college of Les Pages, what have we

to hope from the courtliness of future Russia?

At length, just as I was meditating a dignified withdrawal from the family synod, in sauntered Alfred de Vaudreuil, unaware of lifs cousin's arrival; and the greeting of Count Alexis was to him as warm and cordial as to me he had been frigid and ungracious. They embraced à la Russe (for it is no longer the fashion, you tell me, for Parisians to embrace, as we used to call, à la Française); and in a moment the military imonster was heart-deep in conversation with his cousin, in that miraculously Parisian French which in Count Erloff derives nothing from his Vaudreuil origin, since—witness the example of Prince Gallitzin—Russians ôf purely Muscovite blood are sometimes equally accomplished.

But though gradually compelled to admit that my step-brother's colloquial powers were considerable, I scarcely liked him better when talking gaily and freely to Count Alfred than when dumb with me. Monsieur de Vaudreuil's tone of persiflage is strictly in accordance with his name, nature, and personal appearance. Small, light, volatile, restless, the play of his countenance affords an appropriate accompaniment to his words; whereas the hard, tall, cuirassial person of young Erloff, his stern brow and wooden physiognomy afford a more scornful commertary on his own words than his words a mockery on the ways of the world. One perceives that his irony is foreign to his nature: a mask, a

mere pretence.

Monsieur de Vaudreuil, by the way, seemed to regard the presence of Alexis's mother as scarcely more important than the count had considered mine. Without regard to the baroness's often repeated remonstrances on the subject, he began to launch into his usual wild satires on St. Petersburg.

"But that I had promised my charming aunt, your grandmother," sail he, "not to quit Russia till your arrival here, that I might be able to assure her the sole male issue of her house is really six feet two, and as shapely of waist withal as one of our grisettes, trust me I should have here off within a fortnight of my arrival!"

been off within a fortnight of my arrival!"

"I can imagine," replied the young count, "that you may have been more than sufficiently bored here, if you have condemned yourself to attend all the senseless puppet-shows of society. For my part, I detest St. Petersburg!"

"For your part, then, my dear Alexis, I recommend you to keep the aversion to yourself!" cried the baroness, in spasmodic consternation.

"I am not selfish enough to keep for myself what is so well worthy to be shared by others;—and if I detest St. Petersburg, I never told you I detested Russia. I love my regiment, I like my garrison, be it where it may. I like even Moscow.—But I hate this upstart place; which has full twenty years before it, ere it will recover the de-Russianizement of the late reign. Should I ever live to see it become, like Moscow, the seat of the ancient nobility of the country, I may take it into conceit. Till then, give me my camp or my barracks!"

"Bravo! I shall have a charming account to render of you at the Hôtel de Vaudreuil!" cried Alfred, much amused at the baroness's air of consternation. "The Countess Auguste's chief anxiety concerning you, arises from your hybrid origin. Having led too virtuous alife not to make it desirable she should discover a few peccadillos in her own conduct, in order to prevent the office of the Abbé Chaptel from

becoming quite a sinecure, she has always accused herself, as of a sin, of consenting to her daughter's marriage with a foreigner; not from any misgivings concerning her happiness, but because she pretends that the ambiguous nationality of the offspring is a fatal misfortune."

"She despises Marguerite and myself as mutes!" retorted Alexis,

with a hollow laugh.

"Mule-birds are supposed to have the sweetest song in the world, or I would not forgive your ungallant comparison!" cried Alfred, looking affectionately towards his lovely cousin. "No, no! I mean only that the old lady having verified her favourite axiom of 'Soyons de notre pays,' by returning a pure Parisian to Paris after five and twenty years' exile, she is apprehensive that your tinge of Vaudreuil blood may have denationalized you to a degree injurious to your prospects; being as eager that you should become Russian, as that she should remain a Frenchwoman."

"She is right!" replied Alexis, sternly. "Every country should

grow its own virtues. We are too apt to lose time in cultivating feeble exotics, while neglecting indigenous trees of nobler growth. I inherit little from my progenitors; but, thank Heaven, I share at least my grandmother's opinions. Why, however, with this noble pride, did she suggest my sister's education in France?"

Count Alfred paused. I suspect he was sufficiently well aware of the truth to feel that the subject had better be dropped. But young Erloff

persisted in his interrogation.

"My mother coincided in my wishes on the subject:—the plan was my own!" interrupted the baroness, preventing his reply, but with cheeks so crimsoned, as to call forth a correspondent blush on those of Marguerite. Still, her son remained unmoved and unabashed.

"I am sorry to hear it," was his hard reply. "I had always been in hopes it was my grandmother I had to thank for so long estranging me from the society of my sister."

An awkward silence ensued, and Count Alfred, I suspect, enjoyed its awkwardness; for where he is present silence rarely prevails. It was not till we had all felt sufficiently uncomfortable, he began making inquiries of Alexis concerning the length of his stay in St. Petersburg.

"I shall remain here only the time indispensable for my court to the emperor and the payment of my debts," said he. "I have designs on the strong box of an old uncle of mine—the only Erloff with a rouble he can call his own. My wretched patrimony has been so cut up, and is still so fast in the gripe of Jews and money-lenders, that-"

"Alexis!" again interrupted Madame von Rehfeld, "let me request you to defer these extraordinary explanations till you are alone with

your cousin."

"I am alone with my cousin!" replied the count with cold composure. "No one is present here but my family, with whom I conclude it is unnecessary to create gratuitous mysteries.

"Mademoiselle von Rehfeld and your sister have a right to expect that you will select some more agreeable topic of conversation than

your banker's accounts," retorted his mother bitterly.

A scornful glance over the head of poor Marguerite towards myself, marked his utter indifference to my pleasure. A moment afterwards, he added, "We must defer our mutual communications then, Vaudreuil, till you dine with me at my hotel. There, at least, I shall be my own master."

"Your hotel?-Do you not intend then to reside at home?"-de-

manded the baroness with more emotion than I ever before saw her

betray.

"I have no home that I am aware of in St. Petersburg," rejoined the count. "Should Baron von Rehfeld be so obliging as to invite me to become his inmate, take the trouble of explaining to him, that it is painful enough to me that my father's daughter should be eating the bread and drinking the cup of a stranger. For me, I would sooner go and herd with the istvoshtniks of the city, beside the common fire of charity!"

I conclude that Count Alfred was by this time as much pained and embarrassed as ourselves by the reckless hostility of Alexis Erloff; for he now hastily proposed to his cousin to accompany him to the Gas-

tinnoï Dvor, where he had purchases to make.

"I have been waiting your arrival," said he, "to come and drive a hard bargain for me in good set Russian. To address your petty merchants with a French tongue, is to hold out an invitation to be robbed. Come, therefore, and assist me to lay in a stock of Toula steel as a cadeau to my brother; and I am afraid that nothing less than a dozen pair of embroidered boots or slippers will extricate me from the rapacious hands of my fair friends of the Faubourg."

A few more allusions of this description served to divert the attention of Count Erloff; and while he was settling with Monsieur de Vaudreuil

the progress of their drive I stole out of the room.

Embarrassed, almost dismayed, by the defying tone of this new member of our family circle, it was a relief to remember that, by my father's permission, I was to dine that day with Princess W. and accompany her to her box at the Bolshoy theatre, to hear the famous Russian prima donna, Madame Semenoff. Though I had lost all spirits for the diversion of the evening, anything rather than remain at home at such a crisis!

You may remember telling me, chère bonne, in the letter inclosing my packet of introduction to Princess W—, that I should find her either the most agreeable or the most disagreeable woman in the world; that she became either the one or the other, according to her whims and caprices. Fortunately, I am able to subscribe to the more courteous of the two verdicts, for to me, she has been all grace and good nature; but I am not the less obliged to admit the truth of your assertion that nothing

can exceed her whimsicality.

I have said that she invited me to accompany her to her box, to see the opera of the "Vestalka," on the express plea of gratifying my taste for music. Yet without rhyme, or reason, or music, she kept me chatting for an hour or two in her boudoir, of la pluie et le beau temps, after the carriage was announced; so that instead of hearing the opera, when we entered the Bolshoy, the only person on the stage was a livery servant announcing, according to the custom of St. Petersburg, the performances of the following night.

"You shall hear Madame Semenoff another night," was all her apology. "We are luckily in excellent time for the ballet. You will see our charming Istomina, who is worth a thousand Semenoffs."

Indignant at hearing so slight a thing as a ballet brought into comparison with a noble opera, I was half inclined to propose that, if the carriage were not sent away, we might return the following night for Rossini's "Semiramide," which had just been announced by the stage footman. I stood, however, too much in awe of the princess's railleries

on my petulance to remonstrate; luckily for me, for when I presumed to underrate the attractions of a ballet, very little had my imagination pictured the poetry in action about to be developed for our enjoyment!

Chère bonne!—I have sometimes smiled at your enthusiasm in treating of the opera, satisfied that you have no real passion for music. I see now that your notion of the French opera restricts itself to a good ballet; just as hereafter, my ideas of a Russian one will be included under the same head. How charming!—how brilliant!—how exciting!—You can imagine nothing more deceptive than the scenery, or me imposing than the pageant. The princess, who has seen your charming Taglioni, assures me that Mademoiselle Istomina would be little thought of at the Académie de Musique. But to me, who have seen nothing beyond the incidental dances in some comic opera at our poor little theatre at the Residenz, the crowded stage, with its charming grouping and endless illusions, had all the effect of magic—I was positively entranced!

Engrossed by the enchantments of the stage, I had slightly glanced round the theatre on our first entrance; and though called upon by Princess W—— to notice the imperial box supported by caryatides in the centre of the house, had taken no heed of its occupants. Nay, when, in one of the most interesting crises of the performance, the door of our own opened for the admission of a visitor, I could not detach my eyes from the stage to examine the intruder. The hand of the princess instantly touched my arm; but I could not—no, I positively could not, at that moment, abstract my attention from the divine dumb girl of Portici, who was appealing, by her energetic pantomime, to the sym-

pathies of Masaniello.

I conclude she now withdrew her grasp; for I felt and thought no more of her, or of anything else out of the sultry kingdom of the Two Sicilies, till the fall of the curtain, at the end of the act, suffered me to

draw my breath.

On turning round, still breathless and with tears in my eyes, judge of my consternation on beholding the emperor seated behind me! His countenance brightened by a smile such as, from his ordinary sternness of expression, I had scarcely supposed it capable of assuming. Instantly rising, I was about to falter an apology; but he permitted neither my movement nor my excuses, and hastened to offer me his thanks for the spectacle I had afforded him of a person genuinely fascinated by scenic illusion. The czar, it seems, is himself fonder of a fine ballet than of any other species of recreation; and during the twenty minutes he remained chatting in the box, gave a minute description of several of the best produced at St. Petersburg, — evidently for my amusement, since my companion had been a spectatress of the performances as well as himself.

But, alas! I was no longer stirred by the excitement of the English ball; and the courage which enabled me to reply to former remarks of the emperor, had vanished. I suppose I am beginning to be as susceptible as others to the autocratic spell; for all I could do was to sit and listen in silent sympathy to his really vivid and spirited descriptions.

Scarcely had he left us to return to the imperial box for the second act, when Princess W—— thanked me with a provoking laugh for

the honour done her by the emperor!

"I am aware that Nicholas dislikes me," said she, "and have never been honoured by admittance into the inner circle of the Anitschkoff. The visit, therefore, was paid solely to your bright eyes—I beg their pardon, I mean languishing eyes; which, to do them justice, looked elegies and madrigals all the time the gaunt emperor was recounting

the story of the Nautch-girl and her Hindoo Apollo."

"I fear I appeared immeasurably ridiculous to him as well as yourself," said I; "for I cannot expect either of you to make excuses for my rusticity, or remember that this is the first fine scenic exhibition I ever witnessed. Thirty people would scarcely find elbow-room on our poor stage at the Residenz; while the emperor informs me that the ballet before us contains four hundred performers."

Princess W--- shrugged her shoulders with impatience, at finding me still engrossed by the ballet. She who, only the preceding day, had affected such scorn of courtiership in the person of my step-mother, was evidently intoxicated to a degree utterly incomprehensible in a woman of her age, by the token of graciousness she admitted to have been vouchsafed her in honour of another. Her countenance was completely changed. Her eyes were gleaming-her cheeks flushed. She seemed to have imbibed a new existence from momentary collision with the czar.

"How lucky that we should have come here to-night!" cried she. "And I was so near asking you to accompany me, instead, to hear Mademoiselle Pohlmann in the 'Schweizer Familie.' How fortunate

that I adhered to my first proposition!"

"Fortunate, indeed, for me," was my reply. "I know by heart the music of the 'Schweizer Familie;' whereas all these charming airs and choruses of Auber are quite new to me."

Again did the princess shrug her shoulders.

"I can easily conceive how you must sometimes exhaust the patience of the poor baroness!" said she, at last. "Well, well! six months under the roof of such a step-mother can scarcely fail to render you as worldly as the rest of us; and there stands a man, in Princess Kourakin's box opposite, who, I suspect, will be the first to profit by your proficiency."

My eyes, following the direction of hers, fixed upon Prince Sergius with his glasses directed towards us, intent on all our proceedings. But I had no leisure for further observations. The curtain again drew up, and the fate of Masaniello soon absorbed my every thought and

feeling.

I arrived at home, chère bonne, so wearied by the successive interests of this eventful day, that I would fain have proceeded straight to my room, laid down my head upon my pillow, and slept off my feverish excitement.

But on reaching my chamber I found Marguerite installed there in my arm-chair; who on seeing me, rushed towards me, and threw her

arms around my neck in an agony of tears.

"If you only knew how I have watched for your return," faltered

my poor sister.
"Is anything amiss?" said I, imprinting a kiss on her throbbing

"Is the baroness-"

"Nothing is amiss-my mother is well-" "Displeased with you, perhaps?"

"On the contrary; she has parted from me to-night more kindly disposed than at any moment I can remember since my birth."

"What then has agitated you thus, dearest Marguerite?" said I, replacing her in the arm-chair—for she was scarcely able to stand.

"I have consented to become the wife of Lord Elvinston!" she replied, in a scarcely intelligible voice; and a single glance at her coun-

tenance sufficed to convince me of the agony of spirit in which the admission was made. Her cheeks were colourless-her eyes swollenthe hands which I now clasped in mine, cold as death. There was no mistaking the genuine nature of her distress.

"Dearest Marguerite!" cried I, after closing the doors against the

intrusion of our attendants-for she was in no condition to be seen-"this must not be. If the marriage in question be thus hateful to you, my father shall interfere. Be under no apprehension. You cannot you shall not be compelled to marry a man against whom you have conceived an aversion.

"The act is my own," replied Marguerite in a low but steady voice.
"No compulsion has been used. You must not interfere, Ida; no, dearest sister,—you must not so much as breathe a word upon the subject; or, if interrogated, seem to notice my regrets. The marriage is inevitable. Were anything now to occur in the way of obstacle I

should be the first to propose the renewal of the engagement."

Such death-like despair was pourtrayed in the face of poor Marguerite as she uttered these words, as to render her conduct and motives utterly inexplicable. But to enter into the details of the distressing conversation that followed, is now out of my power. This long letter is the progressive work of many days—eventful days to all here!—and my packet is now sent for by my father, to be enclosed with his despatches to the Residenz. Farewell!

## Letter XX.—From Viscount Elvinston to Sir Thomas Meredyth.

You have so often, dear sir, pressed upon me the consideration of our all but extinguished line, as an incentive to my early settlement in life, that it is with the certainty of your perfect approbation I claim your congratulations on my approaching marriage. I have chosen for my wife a person of suitable age, birth, and connections—highly born and highly educated; and I might add of suitable fortune, for what right has a man of my property to desire, or even accept, a dowry with his wife ?

The bride, with whom you will shortly become acquainted, is eighteen; lovely in mind and person, the only daughter of an illustrious Russian general, who, surviving the untimely death of his master, the Emperor Alexander, only a month, his two surviving children have become especial objects of interest to the imperial family.

The widow, a daughter of the noble house of Vaudreuil, is re-married to the plenipotentiary minister of the Grand Duke of—, at this court; and Count Erloff, the only brother of my future wife, is a promising young officer in the imperial guard.

Such is the family I present to you as about to become my own. You may perhaps desire that I should have selected an English wife; though, considering the numerous objections you have successively pointed out against every family with which my name was matrimonially coupled by the gossip of society, it might have been difficult to find one in my own country every way qualified to meet all your exaction,—reasonable and unreasonable—in favour of your ward. At all events, the few intermarriages between English and Russians with which I am acquainted are examples in my favour; and unless I am mistaken, the society of the venerable Count Woronzoff, at whose hospitable board you were so frequent a guest, must have impressed you in favour of a nation of whom only advantageous specimens have been brought before you.

I am prepared, therefore, my dear sir, to find you welcome my little Russian wife as the grand-daughter of your friend; or rather as my father himself would have welcomed her, were he yet alive. Her name will not discredit our escutcheon, and her personal qualities are

calculated to do honour to my choice.

I must ask the favour of you to have precisely such settlements drawn out as were made upon my late mother. That she was equally portionless with my lovely Marguerite is a sufficient proof that my father would have raised no objection on the score of fortune. In short, dear sir, since I have irrevocably pledged my heart and hand, I sincerely trust you will not oppose any obstacle to the conclusion of my marriage; but do all in your power to expedite the event, and assist me in making the arrival of my bride in my native country, an epoch of

family rejoicing.

You will be pleased to hear that this alliance has met with the especial approval of the Emperor. Since my betrothment, I have been honoured with a private audience. But in justice to the distinctions conceded to the English nobility in my person, let me add that, even before there existed a surmise of my attachment to Marguerite Erloff, nothing could exceed the graciousness of the Imperial family. It is now something more than graciousness. The grateful attachment of the present emperor to the memory of Alexander, by whom his succession to the throne was secured and his education directed with almost paternal tenderness, places the family of the late Count Erloff under his immediate protection. The widow enjoyed, for some time, a distinguished appointment in the household; and from her I have learned a thousand interesting traits of the affection of Nicholas for his late brother.

In Russia, peculiar sanctity invests the memory of the dead. Social life is less active, less hurried, than in countries bearing a longer date of civilization, and more agglomerated reminiscences. Personal recollections and personal property of deceased persons are superstitiously respected. Their chambers are left as at the moment of their death; and I have seen at Tzarsko-çelo, the apartments of Alexander, containing even the apparel he had last in use, previous to his departure for Taganrog. How much greater, therefore, the regard conceded to their surviving objects of regard! It is expected that my future brother-in-law, Count Erloff, will enjoy a brilliant public career under

the auspices of the emperor.

There is much that commands respect in the private character of Nicholas. In many of the relations of life, he has had a difficult part to play, and has played it without repreach. Among others, though a dilemma of a more private nature, might be cited that of reconciling his deep and devoted gratitude to the memory of his brother, with his

recognition of the political faults of the late emperor.

On the accession of Nicholas, a great conspiracy was on the eve of explosion, engendered by the favouritism and want of nationality of Alexander, his love of foreigners, his love of travel. There existed in Russia, why should I not say there exists, two several houses of bondage; the enslavement of the people to the nobility, the enslavement of the nobility to the throne. The emperor, smitten with a most

anti-Muscovitish love of liberty, arising from his free communication with more enlightened countries, was desirous to loosen the chains of the serfs, and re-rivet those of his boyars. The consequence was a most extensive disaffection among the Russian nobility, who saw themselves on the eve of being stripped of their hereditary rights; and there is little doubt that, had Alexander survived the malaria of the Crimea, he would have fallen by the hand of the political assassin.

My visit to Russia has convinced me that there was far greater security for these man-proprietors in the servile subjection of their Mougiks, than in the death or deposition of the reforming czar. When the Protestant minister indebted for his liberty to Queen Elizabeth, entreated "the enfranchisement of four other prisoners, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John," that sagest of sovereigns replied "she must

first inquire whether those prisoners wished to be released."

Alexander had not inquired whether the time were come for abolition, or whether the serfs wished to be released. They did not; they do not. When able to purchase their freedom, they rarely do so; even when it is gratuitously offered them, they frequently reject the gift. Education must clear the way through the mists of ignorance for the light of liberty; and with the darkness of the feudal ages, the Muscovites naturally retain a characteristic servility. Liberty is to them like the diamond to the hungry fowl in search of a barley-corn—a superfluous treasure. It is not the revolutionary odes of a Pouschkin, the brawls of a coffee-house, or even the intrigues of a few turbulent nobles, which constitute for a nation the dawn of its day of freedom.

No one who beholds the prosperity of Russia can doubt that the Carbonarism of the country was finally put down by the execution of Pestal and his confederates; and by the prompt intrepidity of Nicholas, in suppressing that important but ill-organized conspiracy. The sanguinary spirit of Russia found a legitimate issue, just then, in its Turkish campaign; and for some time to come I prophesy peace.

That my prognostications may be fulfilled, dear sir, pray with me; for, from this time forth, the interests of Russia will be inextricably

blended in my affections with those of my native country.

## Letter XXI.-From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil, to Count Jules.

I HAVE long intended to commence my next letter with the announcement of the period of my return, my dear brother: conceiving it better to set off on my southward journey before the breaking up of the frost destroys the Bahn, or snow-road, which for many months constitutes the better half of Russian travelling. This, however, is impossible. I must remain here to perform a kinsman's part at the wedding ceremony of poor Marguerite Erloff; and as we are waiting the arrival of parchments from England, it is probable that spring will make its appearance in St. Petersburg before Alfred de Vaudreuil is able to make his in Paris.

Marguerite, you will be glad to hear, is about to make a most brilliant alliance. The English whelp we proposed at the Union Club two years ago, has progressed into a lion, and chosen our little portionless cousin

for his lioness. The first idea of the thing revolted me. But what could she do? After all, Elvinston is a good fellow. The English embassy people assure me he has capital grouse-shooting; and he is proprietor of that famous breed of small Highland horses, which I confess I prefer for a light carriage to the Hungarian. I have no doubt she will be very happy.

In fact, so sweet is Marguerite's disposition, that she would be happy anywhere, with anybody; or she could scarcely have resigned herself to the icy severity of her grandmother, or the flashy worldliness of

Madame la Baronne von Rehfeld.

For my part, I am not altogether in conceit with such dull docility. "Her tameness is shocking to me!" It might be adorable in a wife; but in a little cousin in whom one wants to find an agreeable acquaintance, something a little more éveillé might be desirable. I intended her to marry Elvinston, both for his sake and her own. Neither of them could do better. But I scarcely anticipated that she would resign herself without a murmur—she, educated in Paris, and consequently alive to the barbarism of English manners, and the cubbishness of this charming young man with his couple of millions a year!

But from the moment she positively accepted him, not a tear, not a sigh, nor, as far as I can guess, a regret! She has now eyes and ears only for him; and as, English-wise, he has established himself a fixture at the Hotel of the Legation, one has no longer a chance of half an hour's chat with her, to provoke the envy of her jealous step-sister.

By this marriage, therefore, I have lost two pleasant resources; my morning's lounge beside Marguerite's work-table, and my nightly cigar with Elvinston, after the soirées from which we used to return together. Though Marguerite, as the wife of Sergius Gallitzin, as I once thought her destined to become, would have lived in an atmosphere capable of curing a Westphalian ham, my fastidious Anglican friend renounced smoking from the moment of his acceptance as a lover. For my part, I would not give up my cigar to gratify the squeamishness of a Ninon; still less would I warn my friends off my premises, or renounce the little after-ball chat, which constitutes the delight of one's club in London or Paris. I should have fancied Elvinston better taught. But it seems he is not a Crockford's man.

Alexis Erloff has made his appearance,—a bear that has been taught to dance, but will never be taught to walk. Do you understand me? I mean that he has received an accomplished education, but that his barbarian instincts remain unsubdued. In addressing a woman, he always gives me the idea of a savage handling a watch, mistaking it for a divinity, yet incapable of appreciating the exquisite merits of the

mechanism.

Imagine our hyperborean cousin accosting me with a kiss that made the room ring again! Kissing is horribly the fashion among Russians of the old school, or rather of the new; for the St. Petersburg of the last reign was far more Parisian than the St. Petersburg of the present, and kissing is a national pastime. There is a bridge here called the Potzalin Most, or bridge of kisses, commemorating a salute nothing more Idalian than between the roughest of Cæsars, Peter the Great, and a captain whom he had despotically and unjustly degraded, and to whom he nobly made atonement by a hearty embrace in sight of his fellow-soldiers. This was a kiss worth millions of those which are besonnetted by our erotic bards!

Alexis Erloff would be a splendid looking fellow for a Chasseur.

Methinks I can see him under the peristyle of the Italian opera, waiting to call up the carriage of some Excellency, or Demidoff, who is so far from an Excellency, or Aguado, in whom, by the way, a Chasseur is an impertinence.

But he is far less calculated to grace a lady's chamber. Impossible to conceive a greater contrast than between the recklessness of Alexis and the gentleness of his sister. Our good cousin must have reserved all

her polished Vaudreuil nature to be infused into her daughter.

The carnival is drawing to a close, and like an opera, becomes the noisier as it approaches its termination. On the whole, it is more of a popular tumult here than with us who have enclosed the pleasures of the people within limit of Mardi-gras. In St. Petersburg, there is a fortnight's buffoonery, of which half may suffice, as it is expressly called the Maslinitza, or Butter Week. A fair is held in the space before the palace; for the purpose, I conclude, of diverting the imperial family with its ice-hills, puppet-shows, and merry-go-rounds.

But they have all the more pretext for the greater gaiety of their carnival, in the greater severity of their Lent. Here, fasting is not a thing devised to give scope to the Cuisinier Impérial for the development of its admirable fish courses, as we have proved on sundry Fridays of our lives at the Rocher de Cancale. It does not purport feasting upon fish instead of flesh—but actual starvation.

To the utmost rigour of this law I shall have to subject myself, as I shall scarcely get away before Easter. I must find my reward in the consciousness of good cousinship, and the spectacle of the spontaneous burst of a Russian spring; the three days whereof suffice to convert fields of ice into fields of verdure, and clothe the hoary woodlands with foliage. The story of Fine Ear, who could hear the grass growing,

ceases in this climate to be fabulous.

By the way, an equally curious transmutation has recently occurred here under my eyes, though in the human form divine. I have seen two trifling girls-two feeble children-emerge from childhood into womanhood. Marguerite Erloff, since her betrothment, has become talkative and almost lively-by a strong effort, I suspect, albeit a successful one. If she still entertain any repugnance against her Son of the Mist, he has no grounds for accusing her of ungraciousness; for she talks more to him in an hour, than I ever saw her talk to any other person in twenty-four. One might almost suspect her afraid of giving him time to find out how little she likes him.

On the other hand, the lily, formerly so free of speech, is grown as close as a despatch box. With me her reserve would amount to insolence, but that she is scarcely more communicative with any other member of our little circle. I am too busy just now (attending the rehearsals of the new ballet which is preparing for the debut of one of our protégées of the Conservatoire, who I intend shall throw the Istomina utterly into the shade), to give myself the trouble of inquiring whether the sudden refrigeration of the charming Ida be owing to the admiration of the emperor and devotion of Sergius Gallitzin; or to the ferocity of Alexis Erloff, or stupidity of Wilhelm von Rehfeld, the country cousin to whom I once fancied her betrothed, and who has unexpectedly made his appearance here, much to the annoyance of his diplomatic kinsman. But so it is that her air of dignity would become the Imperial diadem!

To make the visit of young Rehfeld still more acceptable to his kinsfolk, he brought with him, or rather accompanied hither, a certain Baron von Grünglatz, a duodecimo Cuvier, the Haüy of his native province, and savant par excellence at the Residenz, but elsewhere, of course, a dunce. This excellent man, with his green spectacles, speckled stockings, and broad-brimmed beaver, is pain and grief to the poor baroness, from whose saloon he cannot decently be banished, and whom he persists in hailing as a kinswoman. From old Rehfeld's air of vexation, on the announcement of their arrival, I suspect he had premonished them to defer their journey to a more convenient season.

Here they are, however, small as life-intruding their rationality and scientificality into a circle, which wanted only these two ingredients to render it the most beterogeneous assemblage ever composed out of a

handful of human beings.

Behold us, my dear Jules, as we yesterday sat down to table:—In the first place, your humble servant representing in his unworthy person the modern refinement of the Faubourg St. Germain; and Elvinston in his, the half-slang, half-sullen churlishness of that something between a chancellor and horse-jockey, a London lord; -Sergius Gallitzin, the travelled and consequently polished Russian noble;-Alexis Erloff, the reckless and martial Boyar. Wilhelm von Rehfeld represents la jeune Allemagne, as Elvinston young England; Grünglatz is the erudite German; and the baron himself the sober matter-of-fact Saxon, equally opposed to the heart-sick vagaries of the one and the brain-sick reveries of the other.

Among these discordant particles, be pleased to intermingle the sensitive Marguerite, the haughty Ida, and the worldly baroness; and behold us at table, chatting as good-humouredly as if three or four of

us did not detest the other three or four.

I have sometimes fancied it in the order of things, that every love should beget three or four hates. I am convinced, at all events, that every marriage in a family creates three or four feuds. The Rehfelds were a very united house, I know, till Madame Erloff chose to appropriate to herself the baron; and now is as much divided against itself as the bricklayers' company of Babel! I am sometimes tempted to wish, like the worthy governess of Schloss Rehfeld, that "Peter had been in the way to carry down the chess-box and work-box," and so prevent the fall which dislocated her unhappy ankle, and brought my unhappy self to St. Petersburg. For the incentive that induced me to succumb to Madame von Rehfeld's earnest invitations soon lost its When I found the pretty Ida who adored me, becoming the ambitious Ida intent upon being adored by some man of greater consequence and eclipsing her step-sister, I began to recollect that at Paris I could not fall into worse hands than those of an intriguante; and that the charming strategists of my own country were twice as attractive as the fairest sauerkrautiverous beauty of them all. However, since I have brought my goods to the wrong market—i. e., the Gastinnoi Dyor I will see the best and worst of it.

Alexis Erloff belongs to a favourite regiment of the imperial guard: a guard which, in any other country, would constitute an army. Nothing can be more brilliant than their tenue; the emperor himself being, perhaps, the best inspecting officer in Europe. I cannot, however, concede my approval to the system of cut-and-dry salutations and responses that occur between the czar and his troops on such occasions. "How are you, my children?" cries the autocrat.

"We thank you, father!" replies the army, trembling like Hop-omy-thumb and his brethren in the gripe of the ogre.

"You have done well, my children!" is his imperial token of approval

at the end of a review.

"We will do better, father, another time," was the rejoinder of the line. Conceive the opportunity such facilities would afford for the calembourgs of the Carré de Marigny, or Champ de Mars! Perhaps a stronger proof cannot be evinced of the severe discipline and strict subordination of the Russian army, than this very license. Yet to do justice to Nicholas, I suspect that his popularity with the army was secured for life by his personal intrepidity in the insurrection of 1826, at the epoch of the cholers; when, on entering the Sinnaia Ploshtshod or Haymarket, and finding the populace, after their night's bivouac, prepared for all extremities, he appeared among them in an open carriage, unarmed, and by his single and dignified command of "Na kalenniye!" (On your knees!) compelled the infuriated mass to kneel and pray at once for his imperial forgiveness and the mercy of heaven.

This, and his firm and dignified deportment throughout the disastrous results of the Trubetskoi conspiracy, has given him an inextricable hold on the respect of his soldiers. Of all the sovereigns I ever saw, I must confess that he inspires me with the strongest emotions of personal deference. To be sure, the two monarchs of my own time and country, at whose footstool I have been compelled to do homage, Louis XVIII, and Charles X., are not exactly the most dignified specimens of the Lord's anointed; while the studied courtesy of George IV., as I saw him at his fêtes and levees, was far from imposing. This stern and active czar is a prince of another calibre; a man, and capable of governing

men.

I am assured that, thanks to a most careful education, the information and knowledge of Nicholas on practical subjects, is that of an able mechanic; in more abstruse ones, that of a professor; and the consequence is, that the czarovitz is likely to be educated on a still more improved system. Will the southern courts of Europe—Spain, Portugal, the Sicilies—never take example from the lesson afforded to them, in

these respects, by the more enlightened North?

Adieu. I am expecting Alexis to call for me in his droshka, to accompany him to the imperial stables; which are truly imperial, being of a magnitude to contain fifteen hundred horses. Prince Dolgorucki, the master of the horse, is to do the honours of the same; and we are to see all the state carriages in use in Russia for the last century. Those of Peter the Great, I suspect, were built after the model of the chariots of Pharaoh; but the oriental housings, enriched with precious stones, of the later czars, are said to be splendid. The state horses are as well lodged here as the master of the horse chez nous.

I cannot quite make out Alexis. In appearance and manners he is what Paris would call mauvais genre, and London, a tiger. But I am little skilled to decide upon the plus ou moins of ferocity that ought to characterise the recklessness of la jeune Russie. His object in accompanying me to-day is to mark the ungraciousness of his refusal to play the cicerone to his step-father's kinsmen, Rehfeld and Grünglatz, in viewing the collections at the Admiralty and imperial mint, as he was

earnestly solicited to do by his mother.

Had I known this when he proposed making the appointment with Dolgorucki, I should have declined. But it is now too late. The prince is a man in no position to be trifled with by the caprices of boys.

Alexis appears to be labouring under some strong excitement, the nature of which is still a mystery to me. At times, if he had not spent

the whole day in my company, so as to certify me of his minutest proceedings, I should faucy him intoxicated. At others, but that he is hard as the granite quays of the Neva, or rather cold and rugged as the sheet of ice which now connects them together, I could almost suppose him in love; so wild, inconsistent, and reckless is his deportment.

We have seen one or two of these impetuous, dare-all Muscovites at Paris; but there they are too much kept down by the civilization of the mass to compromise themselves by excesses. Here, I am half afraid of making Alexis my companion at the masked balls, or the coulisses, or any other bachelor haunt. One never feels sure of him, and the grand Duke Michael is apt-to pounce upon young officers when neither on guard nor on their guard, and by the fatal words "aux arrêts!" put a

hasty end to their diversions.

I must beg of you to make all possible interest with Pozzo's couriers (unless you can engage that dearest and best of good souls, Labensky, in our behalf), to convey hither the subjoined list of nothingnesses, which I have set my heart on presenting to Marguerite as a wedding gift, in the prettiest but smallest sultane that Lubin can enclose them. Elvinston has no notion of this sort of thing, though princely in his ideas, and possessing a princely fortune to realize them. One princely idea, however, is wanting—that, [first among the purchases to be made with princely money is taste—that is to say, that he ought to rely implicitly upon the suggestions of the best French artists, instead of trusting to his own inventious.

The people at the English embassy inform me that the heir-loom jewels of the Elvinston family are nearly as fine as one sees under a glass-case in the boudoirs of certain of the fine ladies here, when admitted to their sanctum sanctorum. Among them is a string of pearls, estimated at the value of two thousand louis d'ors; besides diamonds,

rubies, and sapphires to the amount of sixty thousand.

Nevertheless, the poor dear viscount has been making gorgeous purchases here of the turquoises inscribed with Persian characters; and above all, of those splendid uncut-pyriform emeralds we have often admired at Paris on the lovely Madame Potocka, Princess Gallitzin, and others. Conceive his having these set as acorns with diamond cups; a fashion of ten years ago, which I remember admiring as a boy at Baden, worn by Countess Orloff! Now I could have given him a design for the setting, such as should have made even those of the empress baisser pavillon! But the English have no more taste in matters of toilet or jewelery than at the Norman conquest! they can furnish a library, a morning-room, a dining-room, better than ourselves. They understand the mere service of a dinner-table. But as to the fitting up of an écrin, poor Clément, my valet, would execute such a commission fifty times better than Lord Elvinston.

Marguerite, however, is satisfied; probably because she takes little heed of such things. Grateful for his devoted affection, the emeralds are as much lost upon her, as though she were fated, like her step-sister, to become Baroness von Rehfeld, and a fixture for life in the dull old château. For I conclude that the result of cousin Wilhelm's visit will be the arrangement of their marriage; but for the prospect of which the romantic young gentleman would scarcely have made so

long a journey at this unpromising season of the year.

By this time, the lily doubtless perceives that she can do no better. Elvinston is disposed of, and I am not a marrying man. She will therefore do wisely to rejoice the hearts of her father, kinsfolk, and

the squadron of clumsy grey-headed family servitors at the old mansion. who remain firmly persuaded that a Baroness von Rehfeld is secondary only to an empress of all the Russias. Adieu, and I may now sayà revoir!

#### Letter XXII.-From Ida Von Rehfeld to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

CONGRATULATE me, dearest bonne—my utmost wishes are accomplished! Then, having expressed your congratulations, make all

possible speed to get well, and rejoin me.

"At St. Petersburg?" No! not at St. Petersburg; at Paris,—
actually at Paris! where, in two months from this time, I shall be
settled as wife of Prince Sergius Gallitzin, and ambassadress from the

court of Russia to that of France.

You fancy me jesting. You cannot, I fear, readily persuade your-self that engagements so momentous should have been formed in so short a time. But thanks to the mole-like policy of my ingenious stepmother, the preliminaries of this important affair had been long in progress; and before I knew that any proposition on the subject had been made to my father, or laid before the emperor, nothing but my

consent was wanting!

You must have perceived by my last letter, that I was restless and unhappy. The peculiar circumstances of Marguerite's marriage rendered it a sort of blow to my self-love. Had I conceived that her affections were engaged in it, or that the alliance was calculated to secure her happiness, I should have lost sight of the personal mortification I must confess myself to have momentarily experienced. But I saw her sad and dispirited. I saw Alfred de Vaudreuil contemptuous and exulting, Alexis Erloff haughty and insolent; and my father apparently as careless of what was going on in his family, as the baroness was cunningly careful; till, by degrees, I felt humiliated to the heart's core. by my own insignificance.

Judge, therefore, of my revulsion of feeling, when the notice of the czar, and the proposals of the prince, suddenly raised me from this vulgar level to the position which, could I have chosen through the

world, I should have aspired to occupy!

But can it be true? I often ask myself in secret, can it be really true? that I, so obscure,—I, but a few months ago, the unknown hermitess of a Silesian barn,—am on the eve of achieving a rank that will render me an object of envy to two of the greatest countries in Europe? Is it not all a dream, chère bonne, or am I really thus favoured?

I must reduce my ideas to order, in order to render myself intelligible. Everything is so changed with us in the short space of time elapsed since I despatched my last letter, that I scarcely know how to resume

the chain of my narrative.

The first incident I can recall to mind as succeeding to the arrangement of Marguerite's marriage, is the arrival of the family caravan from the Residenz. Conceive, if you can, dearest, my own annoyance, and the irritation of the baroness, when one morning we received intelligence that a bale of family goods had been stopped,—not on the frontier, where there might have been some hope of their detention as contraband,—but at the very gates of St. Petersburg; the Baron von Grünglatz having seen fit to dispute the custom-house right of re-examination of his baggage, which, as regards books, is somewhat savere

He had attempted to extricate himself from the charge of smuggling prohibited works, by announcing himself as cousin to a resident, envoy, chapter the first, of course, of the annoyances likely to occur to our family, from the ill-timed journey of this shallow-witted though pro-

foundly-learned old gentleman and his protégé.

It was easy for my father to despatch his secretary, August von Collin, for the extrication of the rash travellers; who had thus hastened to give proof of the necessity of their visit to Russia by evincing, in their opposition to a form of law, their utter ignorance of the spirit of autocratic government. I suspect that, but for their relationship to my father, they might have found it difficult to obtain a carte de séjour, for the high police of St. Petersburg is as little favourable to refractory visitors as to refractory subjects. Their absurdity, however, so far befriended us, that the baroness strenuously represented the impossibility of accepting as immates persons so little amenable to the imperative absolutism of this country.

"I must entreat you," said she, "to make the same inhospitable exception in this instance, which I did myself in that of Alfred de Vaudreuil. I will even, if you please, remove my daughter into the vacant suite of apartments, in order to avoid the appearance of having unoccupied rooms. The old savant would not only render us ridiculous by his simplicity of mind and manners, but fill the house with a host of thread-bare naturalists; while your nephew, with his flighty romanticism, might—but no matter!—I see you are of my opinion. I shall plead the preparations for Marguerite's marriage, as leaving us no time

to do the honours of St. Petersburg at this moment."

I was apprehensive that Marguerite, who was present, would adventure a word of intercession in favour of two persons, on whom I have seen her waste more attention at Schloss Rehfeld, than upon all the princely offs and skys of her own country; for the tears stood in her eyes. She said not a word, however. My father readily adopted the unkinsmanlike part assigned him; and Wilhelm and the prosy old baron have taken up their abode in a private lodging near the Admiralty, one of the finest situations in the city.

The evening of their arrival, I was struck by the account of the first interview between Wilhelm and his uncle, given to the baroness by Monsieur de Vaudreuil, who happened to be installed in the salon of

the legation when he made his appearance.

"You surely cannot have received a letter, which I wrote to you," observed my father, coldly, "suggesting the desirability of postponing

your journey till the summer season."

"On the contrary, it came duly to hand," was the equally cool reply of the young gentleman. "I communicated your counsels, sir, to the baron. But he had already made his preparatives for departure; and preferred being here in winter, during the sojourn of the court, aware of the signal notice bestowed by the czar on literary or scientific foreigners of whatever nation."

"Baron von Grünglatz estimates himself as though he were the discoverer of a planet!" was my father's pettish rejoinder. "He may

chance discover here, that a mere taste for beetles and butterflies does not constitute the ideal of the emperor of Russia of a scientific

traveller.

"At all events," retorted his nephew, firmly, "the Baron von Grünglatz travels as an independent gentleman, and chooses his own time and place for the enjoyment of his pleasures. It is not for me to dictate to him."

"Certainly not. But yourself,—was it also with a view to interesting Nicholas I. in some scientific or literary pursuit, that you resolved on

thwarting my suggestions?" rejoined my father.

"I had long promised the baron," persisted Wilhelm, "that whenever he saw fit to visit St. Petersburg, I would bear him company. Having given my word, there was no possibility of retracting."

"Do you expect me to believe, sir," cried my father, "that your journey hither has any other motive than the report which has probably reached the Residenz of a projected marriage in my family?"

Wilhelm was silent.

"Can you even deny, that your arrival here at this moment is

actuated by the desire to frustrate my projects?"

"I can—I do,"—replied Wilhelm, with some emphasis. "I am come hither without a gleam of hope; in the vain desire of gazing, for the last time, upon all that is consummate in female beauty and excellence,

ere it be irrevocably bestowed upon another."

"You have, probably, crossed on the road my letter, intimating that the negotiations to which I have alluded were on foot," was my father's embarrassed retort. "Fre anything serious was concluded, you would have been duly informed, as so near a kinsman has a right to be. We will, however, remit this discussion till a more propitious moment, as it is one of delicacy and importance."

I confess I was greatly startled by the intelligence thus conveyed. That Wilhelm should affect such intense devotion to me, after the attentions I had seen him lavish on my step-sister, was almost an impertinence; but that my father should distinctly allude to the possibility of my marriage with another, was a discovery far more interesting

to my feelings.

Three persons suggested themselves as perhaps involved in the new projects of my family,—Prince Gallitzin, Count Erloff, and Monsieur de Vaudreuil; for the latter was so guarded in his mode of expressing himself, that it was impossible to surmise what degree of interest he might take in the subject. I own I trembled under the excess of my

own misgivings.

At dinner that day, resolved to mark to Wilhelm von Rehfeld my utter contempt for his tardy recognition of my "consummate beauty and excellence," I so placed myself at table, that he was forced to sit beside Marguerite Erloff; on whose right hand sat her Britannic futur, absorbed in the self-contented, phlegmatic taciturnity, which forms the basis of his character. I was immediately opposite, between Baron von Grünglatz and Alfred de Vaudreuil.

Perceiving that the latter was attempting to draw me into confederacy to victimize my quizzical kinsman, whom he was fooling to the top of his bent, in conversation across me, with the view of rendering him even more ridiculous than nature has already done, I devoted all my attention to the old gentleman; engaging him in conversation in so low a tone, as to circumvent the malicious designs of Count Alfred,

Times are changed, chère bonne, though only three months have intervened, since I suffered myself to be betrayed at Schloss Rehfeld into the ill-breeding of joining in the mystification of my father's guests; and Monsieur de Vaudreuil was, I suspect, startled to find the little provincial assume an air of decency—not to say of womanly dignity.

As far as my attention to the prolixities of the poor old gentleman would permit (for he scarcely spared me a particular of his observations on his journey, geographical, geological, botanical, zoological, or entomological), it appeared to me, that Wilhelm was conversing somewhat earnestly with my step-sister, and in his native tongue. But though Marguerite and I have been making a diligent exchange of our German and Russ ever since we became sisters, so that she not only perfectly understood him, but was qualified to reply in the same language, I could not but admire the delicacy which dictated her answers in French, the only language, besides his own, understood by Lord Elvinston. Right well does she deserve the rejoinder I heard him make in her favour, after dinner, to Monsieur de Vaudreuil; who whispered to him an inquiry whether he were not jealous of the familiarity of her Silesian adorer.

"What were a man "Jealous of Marguerite?" was his reply. worth who, after receiving the troth-plight of Mademoiselle Erloff, could for a moment fall into the meanness of jealousy? So long as no positive engagement subsisted between us, I was jealous to wretchedness, to desperation; jealous of you—jealous of all who approached her. But now, absent or present—nay, were I forced at this moment to depart for England, leaving her in St. Petersburg, I should feel satisfied, however long apart, that, till I received from her a withdrawal of her promise to be mine, nothing would betray her into an injurious thought

or feeling towards her future husband."

Happy Marguerite! This is indeed affection! This is a degree of confidence to be proud of! And to do justice to both, it is a confidence

of which she is well deserving.

That night, after I had retired to rest and was disposing myself to sleep, I fancied I could hear the breathing of some person concealed in the room. There exists in Russia so little resembling privacy, that I never feel startled when a servant suddenly starts forth from some dusky nook of any chamber in the house. But as the light of the veilleuse showed me nothing but the eternal old yellow hangings, of the sight of which I am so weary, I, at length, ventured to exclaim aloud. " kwo eta?" hoping the question might provoke a satisfactory response from my nocturnal visitant.

A dusky figure suddenly emerged from the curtains at the foot of the bed, and threw itself on its knees by the bedside. But my momentary panic was dispelled by the sobs bursting from the bosom of the

"Dear Marguerite," cried I, instantly recognizing my step-sister,— "what-what has moved you thus?"

Some moments elapsed before she recovered herself sufficiently to reply. Even then her words were scarcely audible.

"Forgive my weakness!" she faltered; "forgive these tears. I should not have courage to slied them in presence of a witness-even in yours -but that I am resolved they shall be the last that fall from my eyes under such disgraceful influence!"

"What disgraceful influence, dearest Marguerite?" cried I, folding

her in my arms. "Explain yourself! For some days past, you have respecting you. What has wrought this change?"

"His arrival!" faltered Marguerite, still more faintly than before.

"Whose arrival? Your brother's?"

"My brother's was, alas! the origin of the marriage to which I have resigned myself. My present misery-" she paused.

I found it impossible to assist her confessions by a conjecture.

"My present misery," she resumed, "arises from knowing myself to be the cause of wretchedness to another."

"You cannot surely allude to Wilhelm von Rehfeld?" I exclaimed, a sudden light brightening the confusion of my ideas. "It is the rumour of your marriage, then, which brought my cousin to St.

Petersburg?"

"You surely overheard all he presumed to say to me at table? I felt that you, as well as others, must overhear it. I tried to check him— Heaven knows it was far from my desire to listen to the recital of sufferings out of my power to alleviate. Had he spoken so freely at Rehfeld, I might have yet been his. Lord Elvinston knew not of my existence, nor I of his; nor had my brother involved himself to a degree requiring the aid of my marriage portion to rescue him from disgrace. Had Wilhelm then taken courage to open his heart, our fortunes, humble as they were, would have sufficed the wishes of both; and we should have been happy, Ida, -oh! how exquisitely happy. For he liked me-preferred me-loved me-loved me with a passion as pure and fervent as that of my future husband; and had he been free, I should then have chosen him from the universe. But he was fettered by a family engagement, from which he knew not how to disentangle himself; though even then, he now assures me, he saw that he was an object of contempt to you; and wanted only the courage derived from experience of the world to explain to the baron his motive for desiring that all project of an alliance between you should be at an end. When, in addition to the consciousness of incompatibility of disposition between you, was added that of affection towards myself revealed by our separation, he instantly determined to follow us to Russia—enter into the fullest explanations—and demand my hand."

"And what prevented him?" was my abrupt inquiry.
"The baron's interdiction. Your father wrote to signify his desire that the visit might be postponed; nor was it till rumours of my marriage transpired at the Residenz, he determined to brave his family displeasures, and hurry hither, in the hope of being yet in time."

Do not expect me to compassionate him!" cried I; "not from mean girlish jealousy,—not from dissatisfaction at his having preferred you to one who regarded and treated him with the utmost contempt, but because he wanted energy to shape his own destinies; because he had not courage to throw off the petty yoke of family bondage, and claim the hand of one, on whose heart he had probably grounds for supposing himself to have made an impression. I despise such a man!"

You speak boldly, Ida; for you have been reared in prosperity, and know not the dispiriting influence of subjection. Your cousin is depen-

dent on his mother—in some measure, on your father."

"Not more so then than now," interrupted I, "and you see it required only a desperate extremity to force him to think and act for himself. I loathe a person whose courage is thus tardy. But it is not alone my

contempt for Wilhelm, dearest Marguerite, which renders it impossible for me to enter into your momentary sorrow. I feel that you are far more worthily matched in your engagement with Lord Elvinston."

Marguerite answered not a word. Involuntarily her face concealed

itself in the bed.

"Your liking for my cousin Wilhelm," I continued, "was the mere result of circumstances. He was the first man who seemed to distinguish you, and distinguished you at a moment when you were forlorn and unhappy. In the full exercise of your reason, Marguerite, you

never could have preferred a man so unrefined."

"Unrefined in manners, perhaps," she faltered; "but, for my part, I heed only refinement of mind. I prefer a man like your cousin, whose every thought is pure, whose every intention honourable, whose every word honest, to one like mine,—graceful in deportment, elegant in language, but corrupt to the very heart's core in principle and conduct."

It struck me-I am wrong, perhaps,-that this observation had

almost the tone of a taunt.

"I see no occasion," said I, "for instituting a comparison between persons so dissimilar as our two kinsmen, whose claims and pretensions can never be brought into rivalship. Monsieur de Vaudreuil is doubtless all he ought to be for the society in which he is fated to move, for the latitude of your noble Faubourg and bals de l'Opéra. But Lord Elvinston, Marguerite, is a being of a better sphere; a man who will move through life nobly, and bequeath in death an honourable name to his successors. The affection and companionship of such a husband will soon teach you to forget the romantic whinings of Wilhelm von Rehfeld."

"But that I firmly believe it," replied Marguerite, in a steadier voice, "trust me, I had not, even to secure the prosperity of my only brother, consented to become his wife; nor would I even now retain one hour his ring of betrothal. This very evening, Ida, I would have boldly told him all, besought his indulgence, and accepted Wilhelm's proposals that

I should become his poor and humble wife."

"Thank heaven, you have been tempted to no such romantic exploit," exclaimed I. "Happiness in its brightest form awaits you. But tell me, dearest Marguerite (since you have so far opened your heart to me), what mean these allusions to the entanglements of your brother?"

"You must now know all—I feel that you ought to know all!" murmured the poor girl. "Yes, Ida! my brother has been imprudent. The savings that were to have been appropriated as a dowry to myself, had I become the wife of Prince Gallitzin, were indispensable to the redemption of his honour. The Emperor, if apprized of the follies which have placed his signature in the hands of the Jews, would have withdrawn his protection from him for ever. There was but one alternative. My mother distinctly showed me that there was but one; and that I ought to esteem myself thrice happy, in having occasion to form an honourable union with one who expressly conditions that he will receive no marriage portion with his wife."

"I was afraid some such crisis had occurred, so suddenly to alter your intentions!" cried I. "But why, dearest, did you not confide this to me in the first instance? I would have appealed to my father in your behalf. My father is rich; I am convinced he would have so acted

towards Count Alexis as to render this sacrifice superfluous." 31

"It is no sacrifice," replied my step-sister; "or rather it is the mere sacrifice of romance to reason. I was not born to become mistress of my own destinies. My task on earth is one of submission."

"Still, my father's interposition might—"

"It could only magnify the evil. My brother would not have accepted his aid. My mother's affairs are miserably encumbered. It is her great desire and object to intrude them as little as possible on the baron's notice."

"Still, a time must come for explanation, when—"

"Be it then when his house is disencumbered of my presence, and my brother's promotion secured. Such is the object of my mother in hastening my marriage—and but for your cousin's unfortunate arrival, I had completely reconciled myself to my fate."

"Let no such petty influence overcloud the bright career that lies before you," cried I, with indignation. "But tell me, dearest Marguerite, how comes it that your brother, who, on arriving here, made so little secret of his antipathies, has been of late induced to honour us

with the light of his countenance!"

"Alexis has been doomed to accept a variety of humiliations. Crime brings its punishment. After all he ventured to urge to his mother against intermarriage with foreigners, he has been forced to sanction, nay, advise, my union with Lord Elvinston; while my mother, on the other hand, made it the condition of assigning to him the funds indispensable to the preservation of his credit, that he should conduct himself with respect and courtesy towards every member of her new family."

"I have consequently to thank the baroness," was my bitter rejoinder, "for the empty demonstrations of esteem with which I have been honoured by Count Erloff!—I trust I am duly sensible of the

obligation."

"Oh! Ida—Ida!—you cannot think it!" exclaimed poor Marguerite, clasping her hands. "No, no! imprudent as Alexis may have been, he is neither heartless nor lost to honour. Grievous is it to him to have proved the means of influencing my choice under circumstances so cruel. Yet I am convinced that it is a still severer trial to find that the family so distasteful to him from the peculiar circumstances uniting us—the family to which he feels bound, and from which he consequently feels disunited by the iron fetter of pecuniary obligation,—contains a person who, but for that mortifying affinity, was formed to captivate every affection of his heart!"

I was silent. It was some consolation to my wounded pride that, among so many blunders, I had not misinterpreted the admiration which, a few days after his arrival, had begun to animate the looks

and gestures of Alexis Erloff.

"You are fully aware how much my brother is disposed to admire—to love you!" resumed Marguerite. "But for that dawning feeling, he would not have so far overcome his prejudices, as to sit at your father's table, and enter with him into social fellowship. But of what avail his feelings,—of what avail my own?—We are alike too poor to indulge in the luxury of choice!"

"Are you certain," said I, as composedly as I could, "that no idea is entertained either by your mother or son, of an alliance between

us?"

"Perfectly so. Wilhelm's arrival has brought to light a thousand family mysteries. His explanations with your father have been the

means of extracting from the baron an avowal, that your marriage with Prince Gallitzin awaits only the emperor's assent, and your own. Every preliminary has been arranged; and the imperial family per-

fectly approve the connection."

However mortified that intelligence so momentous to my happiness should be conveyed to me indirectly, and that my own voice in the affair appeared to be so lightly regarded, I could not forbear rejoicing that, thus forewarned by the indiscretion of my step-sister, I should be on my guard whenever it pleased my father to intimate to me the engagements he had all but taken in my name. I felt that it would be only a fair retaliation to throw the ambitious projects of the family into disorder, by exercising my right of election.

Though I soothed away poor Marguerite to her chamber, and watched beside her pillow till she fell asleep, my own was rendered painfully restless by the consciousness of being involved in a web of stratagems and deceit. It was now clear to me that both my father and myself had fallen a sacrifice to the interested arts of Count Erloff's widow; and that she was about to repair the broken fortunes of her son, by conciliating the emperor through the influence of her step-daughter,

and an advantageous marriage for one of his favourites.

Whatever might have been previously my views concerning Prince Gallitzin, these discoveries sufficed to stimulate me to oppo-

sition.

To circumvent the plans of this heartless woman was now my chief object. I accused her French origin—her Vaudreuil blood. All the rhapsodies I had ever heard uttered by Wilhelm von Rehfeld (and right well are you aware of his national antipathies to the people you have taught me to love in your person!), all I had ever read in the patriotic diatribes of my country—recurred to my mind. I reviled her in the spirit as the most designing of womankind; and fell asleep rejoicing in the idea that it was in my power to defeat, on one point at least, her artful tactics. She might trifle with the patrimony of her son,—the destinies of her daughter:—she should not sport with those of Ida you Rehfeld.

You will readiy imagine, chère bonne, you, who know the impetuosity on y character,—how great was my indignation at finding myself included as a mere puppet in the machinations of this woman. I have long felt irritated by the certainty that my father was beguiled into his marriage; but the deference the baroness has invariably conceded me, induced me to hope she entertained sufficient consideration for my abilities to have sought me as a rational colleague, rather than have

imposed upon me as a dupe.

I resolved to seek an interview with my father the following day; and without betraying the secrets of Marguerite, or pointing out his nephew to his displeasure, prevent his including Wilhelm von Rehfeld so familiarly in our domestic circle as to endanger the happiness of his step-daughter's approaching union. I even meditated an entreaty to him, so far to modify the intimacy of Monsieur de Vaudreuil with the family, as to secure the baroness from the co-operation in her plottings of too cunning a confederate.

But alas! dearest, the composure of morning brought to my agitated resolves of the night all the refrigeration which proceeds from the worldly influence of the routine of daily life. I trembled at the idea of demanding an audience of my father, which must lead to explanations such as might be fatal to his domestic comfort. To withdraw the

scales from his eyes, knowing that his ignorance was bliss, was scarcely

a task for his daughter.

Still, it seemed unpardonable on my part to leave him blind and confiding in the hands of those to whom his happiness was a matter of such little moment;—and when at length I sat down to my morning's occupations, knowing that Marguerite was gone with Lord Elvinston and her mother to perform certain visits of ceremony to the family of her late father, I could scarcely restrain my impatience at the consciousness of the unseen influence to which we were all subjected, and my insufficiency to its counteraction. For to own the truth, I ascribed not only the marriage of Marguerite, but the project of my own, to the cold-blooded and far-sighted policy of Alfred de Vaudreuil.

Scarcely was I scated at my writing table, attempting to devote my faculties to the study of the Russian language, in which I have been labouring to interest myself, when I was formally summoned by August von Collin to my father's presence: nor could I refrain from a smile at the deferential manner with which poor August delivered his message, and recommended urgent speed, as the "Herr Baron was

waiting.

The opportunity of which I had been ambitious seemed at once to present itself. The baroness was away—my father alone. I would seize on the opportunity to explain to him the precarious nature of the ice on which we were sliding, and the dangers I apprehended from the chilly abyss below. I took courage. I refreshed myself by a moment's pause for reflection; then proceeded leisurely towards my father's apartments, resolved to throw myself at his feet, with a strenuous appeal to his paternal love.

So preoccupied was I by the train of my ideas, that I had more than half traversed the library before I perceived that it was not the 'grave person of my father which occupied his usual seat. It was the emperor himself who rose to welcome me, and place me in one by his side! My father, who had evidently been scated in confidential conversation with the czar, was already in the act of leaving the room for his

private cabinet.

"My dear Ida," said he, when about to cross the threshold, "though I feel it unnecessary to claim your respect for the communication about to be made to you by his imperial majesty, it is perhaps desirable you should be aware that it has the fullest sanction and approval of

your father."

I have already repeatedly attempted, chère bonne, to describe to you the unaccountable mélange of grace and authority that characterizes the deportment of Nicholas. It is that of a well-graced actor, equally qualified for his part by nature and education; and I candidly confess to you, that, however much at my ease with him in the cheerful interchange of festive life, I could as soon find courage to reject any proposition of his, made in good imperial earnest, as to confront the thunderbolts of Heaven! It was, therefore, doubly essential to me to ascertain the nature of the overtures thus mysteriously announced; and I took the seat to which I was conducted by the emperor, with just the shame-faced air that Marguerite might have assumed on any similar occasion.

I had made up my mind this morning to relate to you, word by word, the conversation that ensued; which, Heaven knows, contained not a syllable I might not divulge with honour to both in presence of my father, the empress, or heaven. Yet absurd as it may appear, so peculiar

a sanctity appears to me to invest every word uttered by the emperor, that you must forgive me for glancing slightly at what followed. Suffice it that, with all the charm gracing his meanest expressions, he apprized me that from the moment he learned from Prince Gallitzin the superiority of mental accomplishments enhancing my personal attractions, it had become as much his desire as it was that of one of his faithful servants, and the most honourable of men, that I should assist in maintaining the distinctions of Russian diplomacy at the court of France. The appointment of the prince, he insinuated, depended upon my acceptance of his hand; it being essential to his majesty's political views, that his ambassadors should not only be married, but so married as to do honour to their country, both in the fortunes and persons of their wives.

It was impossible, you will admit, for me to obtain a higher compliment; and so well recognized is the rigid morality of the czar in domestic life, that, pardon my vanity, I felt more flattered by this appointment of the man for whom he was seeking my hand to a post placing me at so vast a distance from the imperial court, than if he had

suggested one about his own person.

I am afraid, dearest, I did not hesitate even the space of time requisite to give some value to my acquiescence, with any less practised

observer than the emperor.

"Nobly spoken!" said he, on receiving my assent. "Once resolved to accept the hand of one of the noblest gentlemen in my empire, you rise superior to the paltry art of dallying with my demand. You will become his wife? I thank you for it. But he will thank you in terms

to render my formal approval cold and worthless."

It was not for me to avow how much that mere approval outweighed the most fervent demonstrations of the prince! After imprinting a ceremonious kiss on my forehead, and the utterance of a few grave and earnest exhortations, the emperor summoned my father, placed me in his arms, and took his leave. I was still too much moved by all I had heard and felt, not to be deeply affected on receiving the paternal benediction. Even when, some hours later, Prince Gallitzin himself appeared, to thank me for what he termed the gracious affirmative I had intimated through the czar, and express his triumph in the gratification of the dearest wish of his heart, my eyes were still wet with the tears of my previous excitement.

Throughout the solemn declarations that ensued, my firmness did not a moment falter. My pride in the honourable commendations bestowed on me by the emperor, my certitude that, had he not thought me deserving the highest confidence, he would not have promoted a match to which mere advantages of fortune afford no incentive (since Russia abounds in heiresses, twice, nay twenty fold richer than myself), gave me courage to support the ironical smiles of Monsieur de Vaudreuil, and the triumphant tones of my step-mother. Let me add, that the prince himself was perfect on the occasion. What a charm has highbreeding under similar circumstances! He neither gave way to emotions unbecoming his age, nor for a moment suffered others to be in doubt as to his feelings of personal deference and pride in the match negotiated for him by his imperial master.

His manner delighted me the more from its opposition to that of poor Lord Elvinston, who fancies it necessary to notify his attachment to Marguerite to the whole household, by fixing his eyes permanently on her face, and his person to her side. I am more aware of the prince's recognition of my powers of mind, from the avowal of the emperor, than from any compliment of his own. I am now, in short, chère bonne, the proudest and happiest of human beings; and if too diffuse for your patience in this exposition of my prospects, will amend my fault by becoming terse and sententious for the remainder of my days. I have attained the summit of my hopes! What can I ever have further to communicate tempting me to prolixity, unless the expression of my gratitude towards one who had so much share in making me what I am, and consequently in preparing the way for what I am to be?

Letter XXIII.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to Countess Auguste de Vaudreuil.

Belle tante, I have the honour to announce to you a new ambassador and ambassadress from the court of all the Russias, the latter a person especially interesting to your feelings, as the daughter of your daughter. Not your precious Marguerite. No! her destinies are secured, thank

Not your precious Marguerite. No! her destinies are secured, thank heaven, in a country where the imperial nod neither conveys an estate nor deprives a man of his head; a country which has no knout and no Siberia behind the curtain. The wretched picture unfolded to me by the poor baroness, during our intimacy at Schloss Rehfeld, of the tortures of her own precarious favour, the outlay of time, money, and convenience at which it was purchased, and the risk of an imperial friendship of which a faded gown, ill-curled feather, or mis-matched equipage, may at any moment dissolve the ponderous links, determined me to establish her daughter, if possible, in a land where life progresses imperceptibly upon castors of gold, where egotism is cultivated as a religious duty, provided the worship of selfishness be performed in couples, and where all the best luxuries of France are to be found, with the superaddition of those of Great Britain, i. e., fish sauces, patent saddles, tooth brushes, and the liberty of a press much addicted to taking liberties.

As you may by this time have surmised, it is Mademoiselle von Rehfeld who is about to expand into Princess Gallitzin. My cousin will thus be relieved from an insubordinate and contentious inmate; while Paris secures one of the most charming and gifted little witches in the world to vary the monotonous level of its society. I was getting heartily tired of our soirées at the petit château and the Faubourg. They were too perfect, too tame, too equable. This wilful stranger will, if I mistake not, throw a golden apple into the midst of our assemblies, more than rivalling in its motive powers the fatal one of Até; and it will be some honour and some pleasure to me to officiate on the occasion as both cicerone and mentor. The Almanach de la Cour points out by name and salary l'introducteur des Ambassadeurs. Why not institute myself, gratuitously, l'introducteur des Ambassadrices?

My pleasures and diversions here are already more than doubled by the anticipation; and the amusement I derive from beholding my future ambassadress playing the peacock by anticipation and displaying her glittering plumage in the sun, is well worth the sacrifice I have made, on Marguerite's account, of extending my stay in St. Petersburg. Never did a poor child so thoroughly mistake herself and the world as Mademoiselle von Rehfeld! Though the prospects of Marguerite are millions of times more brilliant, as bride of a man whose annual income exceeds in amount the entire property, hereditary or acquired, of Prince Gallitzin, and whose fortunes are based upon independence in an independent country, instead of hanging upon the caprice of an autocrat in the most wretched of European climates,—my little cousin contemplates her destinies with composure, moderation, and modesty; while Ida already fancies herself half an empress, because selected to patch up the fortunes of a needy ambassador!

For such is unquestionably the fact. Your future excellency is one of the poor members of that more than patriarchal clan of Gallitzins, which commences at the foot of the throne, and ends among the laquais de places, and dvorniks, or porters; and is so far from ranking high among them, that most of the aristocratic houses here regard him in the light of a political adventurer. Among his own country people he would have found it passing difficult to secure a fair wife with a dowry so passing fair as that which the baroness has prevailed upon her vain.

glorious and amenable lord to bestow upon his daughter.

You will perhaps be surprised that, having persuaded him, she did not afterwards contrive to bestow it with the hand of Ida on her son. But Baron von Rehfeld, though tempted into liberality by the prospect of placing his only child in a brilliant position, would not have exercised it on so noble a scale for a mere Count Erloff; nor, it is probable, would the emperor have so far considered the interests of Alexis, as to condescend in his favour to the solicitations he conceded in the interests of the prince.

Admit, therefore, that she has acted for the best. By not attempting too much, she has prospered in all she attempted. The emperor is in the highest good humour with her. She is on the eve of getting rid of a portionless daughter and troublesome charge; after which, she will be at leisure to devote herself to the adjustment of her son's affairs, which, entre nous, her own expensive habits have not a little tended to

embarrass.

The influence which these family events are having, or may have upon Alexis, I scarcely know how to describe. He is a most extraordinary person, wild, daring, reckless; extreme in good and ill; doing all the rash and foolish things which I content myself with saying:—playing high, riding desperately, drinking madly,—a roue in thought, word, and deed; yet so young in feeling, and fresh in mind, that, in spite of the prejudices with which he came forearmed against the whole tribe of Rehfeld, he had not been eight and forty hours in St. Petersburg before he fell madly in love with the Lily!—At first, I fancied that the vehement admiration he expressed was a piece of courtiership; and gave him credit for a tact worthy of the mother who bore him. But I soon discovered myself to be mistaken; and not only mistaken, but that recurrence or avowal of the mistake would probably expose my precious life to the perils and dangers of a duel with this less-trusty than well-beloved cousin.

It is impossible to conceive a more singular conflict than ensued between the growing passion of his impetuous soul, and his predetermination to play the savage with the family, root and branch, of his new stepfather. The late Count Erloff, it seems, was a hardy soldier, who fought like a lion through Alexander's campaign, and bequeathed little more to his children than his well-worn sword. I can make excuses

for the bitterness of feeling with which the son of such a veteran must have beheld his widow bestow her withered hand and the control of her family upon an alien; and he came hither abhorring the very name of Rehfeld, and all the more vehemently, because conscious that he had recently disgraced the one he himself holds in such reverence, by gambling to a degree which even the most experienced in Russian recklessness of gaming pronounce to have been preposterous.

And for the Lily of Rehfeld's smiles to have tamed this savage heart—for the Lily of Rehfeld's glances to have overthrown these stedfast resolutions!—You can scarcely conceive the wild tunult of his ungoverned feelings; or the perfect unconsciousness with which Ida, usually so eagerly on the look-out for conquests, aggravated the mischief by the attentions she devoted to him at the earnest entreaty of the baroness; as a refractory kinsman to be conciliated, lest his waywardness should cause vexation to her father. Soon after his arrival, she united with Marguerite in petting him, as though he were a brother of her own. I have seen her attempt to sing the savageness out of the bear, dance it out of him, smile it out of him,—in short, exercise those charming coquetries of her sex which leave a man no alternative but to throw himself at their feet.

Alexis did not absolutely go this length. But the struggle of his feelings was so overpowering that I suspect, but for the five feet of ice securing the waters of the Neva from intrusion, he would have united the contradictory suggestions of love and pride in a watery grave. For Alexis Erloff, who plays like a madman, loves like a gambler. No chance of bringing him to his senses, unless by a fierce campaign; in which, unless I am much mistaken, he will win such knightly spurs as may form tolerable foundation for the renown of a future Souvouroff. He is now all but frantic; compelled to remain here by the necessity appearing at the double marriage ceremony of his sister and step-sister, to be solemnized under the auspices of the emperor, in the church of

the citadel.

Of a certainty, the Lily of Rehfeld was not born to remain a lily of the field! Nature expressly constructed her for the post she is about to fill. So superabundant a provision of feminine tact was not destined to be thrown away on the humble home of a provincial baron. If you could but see how dexterously she has turned the tables on us all; how admirably she has made the part imposed upon her an act and deed of her own; and above all, with what genius she is making the star of lesser magnitude eclipse the greater!

Elvinston, who possesses the riches of Aladdin, or thereabouts, squanders them as in riches bound, at the feet of the reluctant Marguerite, who has not converge to make him undestand the

guerite; who has not courage to make him understand the nonnecessity of purchasing her time and affections at the rate of an opal or sapphire per hour. Aware, perhaps, of his own deficiency of eloquence, he chooses to play the princess of the fairy tale, and drop pearls and

diamonds every time he opens his mouth.

By making such gifts an express article of prohibition to Prince Gallitzin, Ida has apparently risen superior to the temptation of wealth. The imperial family have sent costly marriage gifts to both our lovely brides; to the one as daughter, to the other as wife, of faithful servants of the imperial crown; and Mademoiselle von Rehfeld has, satisfied the prince that it is a becoming token of deference to the czar and czarina, to accept their magnificent present as a sufficient adornment. Is not the idea Machiavellian? Could not one suppose

that this child of the morasses of the Oder had been baptized in her

swaddling clothes, in eau bénite de la cour?

Elvinston, meanwhile, takes little heed of what is going on among us. His sun, moon, and stars, shine in the eyes of Marguerite; and his sole desire appears for the epoch of removing her from the influence and

publicity of her position here.

These English are the strangest people! To them, the chief purpose of rank and fortune appears to be domestic privacy. With us, as with all continental nations, the nobler the position and the more lavish the means of a family, the greater their tendency to representation. Half the grandeur of the grande dame, depends upon the publicity of her salon; and half the enjoyment of a millionnaire is the certainty his fortune procures him of constant companionship.

But a rich Englishman enjoys in his riches the prospect of being For him they purchase seclusion: a vast solitary park of which he closes the pathways, and on the outskirts of which he affixes placards announcing traps and spring-guns; and a town mansion, with a strong street-door, besides which, a sturdy porter executes the "on ne passe pas" of the royal sentry, in the "not at home" of private life. To be not at home" at will, constitutes one of the real domestic enjoyments

of the English nation!

When the winds rise, according to the counsel of Pythagoras and their own system of philosophy, they worship the echo: ensconcing themselves in their chateaux eight dreary months of the year, and fancying, because twice or thrice in the season they cram them full of acquaintances, without whom their battues or hunting parties could not be accomplished, that they are performing the rites of hospitality. Take an English family, however rich or noble, from whom you have received cordial invitations, by surprise, either for a dinner in London or a passing visit in the country, and you will soon understand the extent of their much-vaunted hospitality.

I have no doubt that, were I to present myself at Elvinston Castle next year during the grouse shooting, without having the day of my arrival fixed by my host, though I have received a formal invitation from him, and shall then call cousins with the honourable house of Elvinston, I should find his countenance as chilly as the aspect of the

frozen ploshthod now lying beneath my window.

All this, however, will suit our dear Marguerite; it will be her beloved convent, minus the angelus and lenten pottage. Marguerite was made to be the saint of such a niche—the Eve of such a paradise. To her society is an incumbrance. She will adore the blue sky, yellow corn-fields, green forests, purple sunsets; and eventually the prosy companionship of Elvinston as the author and giver of her rural pleasures. Elvinston has had the benefit of a first-rate education. Possessing Latin, Greek, and mathematics enough to stock a university, he will strengthen the mind of his docile pupil as much as I trust she will refine and soften his manners. You see they were made for each other!

Let me not conclude my letter, belle tante, without entreating you to refrain from breathing a syllable concerning the new Princess Gallitzin to the very reverberative echoes of your salon. From us, let nothing be known or surmised respecting her. It is a fatal thing to arrive in Paris with a réputation faite, and be judged favourably or unfavourably, according as you fill the preconceived measure of the

ideal created by public report.

The English require to be told what they are to admire. They hissed Pasta, till she came to them bearing the certificates of all the Operahouses of Italy and courts of Europe; and having been instructed to applaud Taglioni to the skies, mistook for her the figurante who preceded her on the night of her  $d\acute{e}but$ , and nearly stifled the astonished woman with bouquets. But Paris forms opinions which become the

opinions of the world.

Leave the princess, therefore, to make her own way, which, I suspect, will be one of the most brilliant ever made in Paris. It is a chance, however. Should there arrive, at the same moment, a giraffe of new complexion, or the skeleton of a larger mammoth than Cuvier has yet culled and put together from the valley of dry bones, honours will be divided. For the ambitious Ida's sake, I trust there may be no Gentoo envoy, no plenipo-extraordinary from the king of Monomotapa (où vivaient les "deux vrais amis") at the same moment with herself. If not—but I will not attempt to play the prophet, when I should gain no credit by the realization of my prognostications!

credit by the realization of my prognostications!

A thousand amiable things to Monsieur l'Abbé; ten thousand, belle

tante, to yourself.

### Letter XXIV. — From Marguerite Erloff to Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau.

NEVEE, mademoiselle, did I sympathize more than now in the regrets expressed in your last letter, that Peter should have been engaged elsewhere at the moment of our departure from Schloss Rehfeld, so as to have compelled you to carry down mamma's chess-box and work-box, the sad origin of your accident, as the cause of preventing your witnessing the approaching ceremony so momentous to your beloved Ida.

How great a comfort would be your presence here; you, so kind a friend, with a ready ear for all our grumblings, a word of solace for all our griefs! My poor mother is so perplexed by multiplicity of business that I am rarely able to obtain a moment's audience. Confusion worse confounded reigns in the house. Never was there such a scene of hurry

and consternation!

Two marriages — two great marriages — two trousseaux — two departures from court — and two banishments to foreign countries! For Princess Gallitzin and Lady Elvinston are to bid adieu to St. Petersburg on the day of their marriage; the former, because affairs of state require the instant departure of the new ambassador; the latter, because such is the custom of her husband's country. An English bride cleaves to the bridegroom, and renounces her own people and her father's house at the foot of the altar. This is a severe trial. In my case less than in any other; yet I own, I heartily wish Prince Gallitzin had been appointed to the embassy in London instead of Paris, that I might not quit Russia thus absolutely alone.

thus absolutely alone.

Strange to relate, I do not believe this regret is shared by Lord Elvinston. Though, on our first acquaintance, he was supposed to be the admirer of Ida, I perceive that he is not sorry the necessary preparations for the brilliant position which Ida is about to occupy so far

absorb her attention that there is less and less familiarity between us. If such a thing were possible, I should fancy him jealous of her influence over me. I have heard him say he detests female confidences. He loves the confiding disposition prompting a young person to seek counsel and support; but once married, nay, once engaged to be married, conceives

that she should require no advice but that of her husband.

Thank Heaven! I am able to gratify his exactions in this particular; for the more I become acquainted with his principles and sentiments, the more I am satisfied that I can abide by no better monitor. Lord Elvinston's opinions are as noble, and his ideas as distinguished, as his enunciation is embarrassed. But I have ceased to remark the mode of expression, and hear only the good and true sentiments that flow from his lips. I know you will rejoice at hearing this; because certain that I would not allude to the subject at all without being able to do so in

perfect sincerity.

Every hour do I see cause to be thankful to the wisdom of Providence, in the ordering of Ida's destinies and my own. Had either of us been asked, three months ago, to name the object with whom we should be content to pass our days, she, I am convinced, would have pointed out my cousin Alfred - I, her own; simply because they were the first persons in whom each had detected, or fancied herself able to detect, a preference for herself. We even repined for a time at the different ordering of our destinies. Yet now, neither would for worlds exchange the prospects before her, for those which captivated her girlish fancy. Ida has discovered the heartless levity of my cousin, who has too much head to allow much scope for the impulses of the heart; and I confess that the ill-timed and exaggerated exhibition of sentiment by which Monsieur von Rehfeld exposed himself and me to the ridicule of our whole family, and which caused his uncle to procure him a mission to Moscow to prevent a recurrence of the scene, sufficed to prove to me that his exaltation of character would have been most unacceptable in the routine of common life. Lord Elvinston, with as much poetry in his soul, has also a vein of such strong good sense that he keeps his romance for his mountains and her whose society is to enhance their charm; and in our social circle exhibits only a sober deportment and rational views.

I am enchanted, by the way, with the specimens of English to whom my betrothment has introduced me. Why have I always been taught in Paris to believe them reserved and formal? Never was I more captivated by dignity of manner combined with true cordiality. I could not suppose that the family at the embassy loved me at first sight; but saw how truly they pitied the embarrassment of my situation when we all dined there; and that they were resolved, by leaving me to myself for a time, to place me at my ease. Surely this is higher breeding than the overstrained familiarity of Russia, or the exaggerated politeness of

France!

I ought to own, perhaps, that they gained my heart by praises of Elvinston. They spoke of him as a son, brother, friend, — in all which capacities I have no means of judging for myself. He has, it seems (so at least he tells me) been wild and extravagant; and pleads this as a merit in a marrying man; inasmuch as, having tasted the cup called that of pleasure, and found disgust and bitterness in the lees, he is not likely to renew the draught. All the evil to be learned of him, I hear from himself; but it is by others I am told of the beneficent improvements he has effected on his Scottish estates, of acts of liberality towards

his sisters enabling them to marry according to the bent of their inclinations, and creating staunch friends for him in his brothers-in-law. By such actions as these he is endeared to many. Am I wrong to be

proud of the attachment of so warm a heart?

These allusions, my kind, good friend, bring me to a point which with you, familiar with our family mysteries, I may venture to discuss. You are aware (for Ida frankly owns to me she has no secrets from you) how reluctantly I submitted to my present engagements; and that nothing but the necessity for retrieving my brother's embarrassments would have decided my consent. It was then my consolation my consolation in an affliction which my girlish inexperience fancied must be indelible—to feel that my self-sacrifice secured the welfare of my only brother.

So feeble is our insight into the purposes of Providence! I am now resigned-grateful-happy; while Alexis, I fear, is miserable for life! The high spirits he affects in our presence are completely forced. can perceive by his manner of withdrawing my cousin Alfred from our society whenever it is in his power, that he dreads the persistage by which Monsieur de Vaudreuil seems every moment on the eve of pointing out to ridicule his passionate admiration of my step-sister.

Alexis is so impetuous—so unlike anything dreamed of in our languid Paris, where to feel deeply, or at least to evince deep feeling, passes for vulgarity, that you can form no idea of his character. In the first place, he believes my step-sister to be a sacrifice to the ambition of others. He has taken it into his head that my mother, to forward policies of her own, is the instigatrice of Ida's marriage; and though I am fully of opinion, that were there no Prince Gallitzin in the world, the Lily of Rehfeld would be as little disposed to become the wife of an impoverished, though well-born captain of the Imperial guard, as of poor Wilhelm von Rehfeld, Alexis believes himself the most unfortunate of men because her engagements prevent him from placing the alternative at her option.

The authority assigned to my mother in the arrangement of his affairs, luckily ensures her so much control over him, as to prevent his proceeding to any act of rashness. For Prince Gallitzin, with all his mild good-breeding is not a man to be trifled with; and has just influence at court which would be fatal to Alexis, should the particulars

of his dissipation reach the emperor's ear.

Every day, when I read in my brother's variable countenance the difficulty of restraining his disgust towards this frigid bridegroom, I tremble lest some unintentional encouragement on the part of Ida, or some mischievous suggestion of Alfred (who cares little whom or what he sacrifices to the diversion of the moment), should provoke dear Alexis into some flighty speech or act, the consequences of which might be fatal to his future prosperity. Alas, alas !-it is a sorry life, when every thought, word, and deed must be measured by the crushing standard of dependence upon an imperial smile!

Adieu, dear mademoiselle!—Would—I say again—would to heaven you were among us! There are a thousand things, vitally important to our family circle, which we cannot say to each other, and which you would say from each to each, with a degree of persuasive kindness, such as first served to reconcile me to my position at Rehfeld, and explain away all that I found alarming and unaccountable in the nature of Ida.

You will hear shortly from her, to whom I leave the details of th

approaching ceremony. When I have quitted this stirring, bustling home, which, in the tumults of preparation, appears to me less a home than ever, I shall write to you again. Do not imagine that Lord Elvinston's objection to girlish confidences will extend to the counsels I receive from, or the gratitude I express to one who stood my friend in one of the most painful moments of my life. Once more, adieu,

# Letter XXV.-From Viscount Elvinston to Sir Thomas Meredyth.

You have shown your usual discretion, dear sir, in your reply to my letter -a discretion how rare under the circumstances that constitute the bond of union between us! but which, when really exercised, ensures that the guardian, who, during his reign of authority, has treated his ward as a friend, will be consulted as a guardian when the epoch of

authority is at an end.

You are well aware how implicitly I refer myself to your advice in all matters requiring a better head than my own,—such as the management of my estates and parliamentary influence; all that your experience and knowledge of the world enables you to contemplate with a more discerning eye. That I refrained from consulting you, as you accuse me, in the affair of my matrimonial choice is a still greater compliment; inasmuch as, having made up my mind with a degree of firmness no argument of yours could have unsettled, I would not so falsify my honest word as pretend to seek advice, which nothing would have induced me to follow.

Such, dear sir, was my motive for apprizing you of my projected marriage only when my faith was solemnly pledged. I have to thank you for the celerity with which you have dispatched me the necessary papers; and the more so, that I plainly infer from the tone of your letter, your complete disapproval of my choice.

I plead nothing in extenuation—I say not a word in favour of my dear Marguerite. She is too perfect a being to need advocacy of mine; and I feel as satisfied that, after a week's acquaintance with her, you will pronounce me to be the most fortunate of men, as if your hand were already on my shoulder, and the words, "My dear boy, I heartily wish you joy!" resounding in my ears. Had I the least apprehension on this score I could tell you wonders of her. But one among my many sources of triumph in this marriage is the heartfelt joy I know it will eventually afford to my family and second father.

You may expect us towards the end of the month. I have written to my sister Leslie to engage apartments for us at the Clarendon; not wishing the house in Piccadilly to be touched till Lady Elvinston is on the spot to give her orders. But I feel that London will have fewer charms for me than ever; and but for my duties in parliament (for I shall now lose no time in taking my seat), would set off at once for the North, caring little how long a time elapsed ere I again became familiar

with

The rattle of street-pacing steeds.

As we shall meet so shortly, and I have just now so many agreeable occupations, accept a short letter and my grateful good wishes.

### Letter XXVI.-From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to Count Jules.

My present despatch, mon cher, will precede by a week the arrival of your loving brother. I shall make it a point of conscience not to start for three days to come, in order to avoid jostling against Prince and Princess Gallitzin at the inns on the road; or having it reported in Paris, that we arrived from St. Petersburg together. They started yesterday; and making allowance for the expeditive privileges of a diplomatic podoroshna and cabinet passport, will, I suspect, reach Paris

on the 26th of April.

This announcement sufficiently acquaints you that the grand event of the double wedding has come off; though I verily believe the poor dear consequential baroness is persuaded you have been already apprized of the fact by the spontaneous ringing of the bells of Notre-Dame, and discharge of the cannon of the Invalides. For the last six weeks she has been in a state of excitement, as the novelists say, better imagined than described; that is, she has been all you can imagine of the state of mind of a very rapacious and very ambitious woman, who marries her daughter to one of the richest noblemen in Europe; and her stepnedaughter to one whose favour at court is in reality as great as that ascribed by vulgar opinion to herself. But it is not of her you want to hear. Even cousinship is not a sufficient plea for dwelling upon a woman without a single womanliness to recommend her to the consideration of our sex.

These Russians, it must be admitted, are most imperially gorgeous when once they give the rein to their princeliness! The wedding was splendid. I defy St. Thomas d'Aquin, in its most Faubourgian of fashionable nuptials, to show anything comparable with the display which gladdened yesterday the pride, if not the hearts, of Baron von

Rehfeld and his wife.

It may be doubted whether so strange a variety of rituals ever before commingled in a single wedding. The Greek church, the Catholic, the Lutheran, and the English, had their share in the performances of the day; and by the time I had seen the marriage ceremony performed four times within a couple of hours, I felt so matrimo-morphosed, as almost to ask myself whether I were not the lawful husband of the sprightly widow you may remember in Paris—Princess W.—who fell

to my share throughout the accomplishment of the pageant.

Let us pass over the English and Lutheran ceremonies (religion in déshabille), which were as modest as becomes the Reformed Church, the doctrines of which pretend to possess that within which passeth show. It was the two ancient churches of Christendom—the Greek and the Roman, which contended for the pomps and vanities of the day; and praying you not to exhibit my letter to Madame de Vaudreuil, who would betray me to the good Abbé Chaptal, and perhaps procure my excommunication, I must admit that my previous opinion was fully confirmed, on this occasion, of the superior augustness of the rites of the patriarchal church.

Nothing can be more imposing, according to my view, than the solemnization of the Greek service. The flowing beards of the priests—their sonorous voices—the mystery created by the inner sanctuary—

seem to unite a sort of Hebraic antiquity with the doctrines of the

Christian faith.

By the desire of the emperor, this portion of the ceremony, the only one at which he was to appear, was performed at the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul within the citadel; which, as you are aware, is situated on an island opposite the winter palace. Being no seeker after or seer of sights, it was the first time I had entered this church, albeit of some consequence as the burial place of the imperial family; and even brightened as it was by the tapers burning in honour of the nuptial solemnization, I was impressed by the spectacle of the simple tombs of these potent sovereigns, each covered with its velvet pall; a form conveying an impression of recent interment, and consequently connecting the long dead with the present generation, far more intimately than if the sepulchre of granite were to appear in simple nakedness.

In addition to these illustrious dead, the church contains numberless military trophies, tokens of Russian prowess and the triumphs of the emperors. It was on this account, I presume, that Nicholas chose the daughter of General Erloff to pledge her faith in the fortress church, in presence of such memorials of her father's faithful service to the sovereign whose ashes repose beside its altar; and Gallitzin to connect the happiest day of his life with the walls which his exertions may here-

after serve to adorn with future trophies.

The structure, simple enough, and lighted by a single cupola (a rare distinction in Russian churches), was filled when we entered with the elite of the court and corps diplomatique; and unless for the marriage of one of royal blood, no higher honours could have been conferred than dignified the scene. The bridesmaids of Marguerite were maids of honour of the empress, of high descent, but selected, I should imagine, for their personal beauty; while the families of the Austrian and Prussian ambassadors supplied the Lily of Rehfeld with a fitting entourage. All that the caskets of this most sparkling of capitals could supply, appeared lavished on the persons of the double bridal train; the shrine of Loretto being out-dazzled by the pavoinik of more than one of the noble Muscovites who deigned to shed the lustre of their

diamonds and countenances on the brilliant solemnization.

Marguerite was arrayed in spotless white, in all the elegance of a Parisian toilette; veil, orange blossoms,—all as it should be to mark the transit of the unadorned maiden to the higher dignities of matronhood. Ida, conscious perhaps that rivalship with the graceful simplicity of her step-sister was out of the question, had chosen to inaugurate herself into one of the ancient houses of Muscovy, in the ancient costume of the country; and though this is contrary to usage, there is a certain piquancy and becomingness in all the actions of a person of her decided character, which defy vulgar criticism. She looked divine in this rich and peculiar garb; and the little crooked sister of the bridegroom, Princess Prascovia Gallitzin, having insisted on adorning her with certain strings of hereditary pearls, each bead of which might form a prince's ransom, in addition to the splendid diamonds presented by the empress, her appearance was dazzling. The ambassadress looked every inch a queen. It was as well that the czarina did not commit the unprecedented condescension of appearing at the ceremony; for the mortification of having to hide her diminished head might have proved fatal to the future prospects of this fairest of brides.

As far as I have ever seen of weddings, after the first moment the interest begins to flag. But on the present occasion a variety of

feminine passions and foibles kept the attention on the alert. There was the Russian party, and the foreign party, eagerly disputing which was the lovelier of the rival beauties, and calling up strifes, jealousies, and envyings, by a thousand insidious words of commendation; and there was the curiosity that dared not expend itself in words, to scrutinize the exact nature of the interest taken by Nicholas in the event. A few, her unworthy kinsman among the rest, were moved by a more ignoble sort of inquisitiveness to watch the exultation of the baroness on an occasion affording ample compensation for a long life of mischance.

Every countenance accordingly was animated, and every soul on the qui vive. In deference to the presence of the emperor, the archimandrite officiated in person, assisted by the chantres de la cour, whose vocal superiority over those of the Papal chapel even Catalani admitted to be incontestable. Nothing could be more celestial than the musicnothing more imposing than the air of the hierarchy in attendance; and the charms of the nuptial hymn and fumes of the exquisite incense seemed to ascend appropriately into the lofty cupola, over the heads of one of the fairest and brightest groups of human loveliness it was ever

my fortune to behold!

The ceremony differs in many respects from that of the Catholic church, to which we next repaired. In the procession, the bridemaidens walk between the paranymphy, or bridegroom and bride, as they approach the altar, bearing lighted tapers in their hands, and, in addition to the rings of silver and gold severally placed on their fingers, gilt crowns of the imperial form are held over their heads by the priests. The prayers recited, or, rather, chanted, during the ceremony, are, being interpreted, of great beauty; and the ever-recurring and sonorous "Ghospodi Pomilui!" or "Lord have mercy upon us," of the papas, seemed to me highly appropriate to the lips of the four unhappy victims labouring under the ridiculous paraphernalia of their nuptial crowns.

By the way, had any doubt really existed as to the palm of beauty to be accorded between the two blooming brides, no one could contest the superior dignity of the bridegroom of fifty over over the one of half his age. Poor Elvinston, deeply affected by the vows he was then pledging to a stranger in a land of strangers, was more than usual ungainly and unpleasing of aspect; while it must be owned that Sergius Gallitzin gained wonderfully by having a prominent part to play; and, in his uniform, glittering with foreign and national orders, looked to perfection the imperial favourite and dignified ambassador. I could see that Ida felt proud of him. If she already affected something of the Juno she

seemed to have found a Jove to her satisfaction.

You have no conception of the influence exercised on this, as on most occasions here, by the emperor's presence. It is not alone on his own subjects this magnetic influence is perceptible. The foreign diplomats, who elsewhere assume the hard immobility peculiar to their vocation, no sooner find themselves within range of the imperial eye, than they become vivified, like the Neva by a clear and searching April sun. Their features play, their eyeballs roll, their limbs extend—the automata become animated as by the scapement of a master-spring.

On our exit from the church, the brass band of the imperial household, stationed on the square before the portals, struck up the Zara Boja Chrani, or popular anthem, in honour of the imperial presence. The forces of the garrison, drawn up in line, presented arms; and in noticing the peculiarly national aspect of the ceremony, no one would have conjectured that two out of the four individuals just made wretches

for life, were of foreign extraction.

The emperor was prevented, I conclude, by engagements, from assisting at the successive solemnization of Ida's marriage, according to the rights of the Lutheran, Elvinston's of the English, and Marguerite's of the Catholic church, as he could scarcely have appeared at one without exciting the jealousies of the rest. He was accordingly the least weary of the company when he met us again at the noble banquet given at the Hotel of the Legation, on our final release from priestly exhortation.

Nothing could be better organized than this portion of the arrangements. The baroness, to do do here justice, is unique in the household department; nor do I wonder that she managed to ruin poor Erloff, convinced, as I am, that every liberal household must beggar its proprietor. A well-mounted table means only a table kept for his friends by some individual generous enough to reduce himself to starvation for the satisfaction of feasting a distinguished circle of ungrateful

friends.

Immediately after the departure of the emperor, who took a courteous leave of the wedding-party, and a feeling one of Gallitzin, the two "brides, magnified as Sarah and joyful as Rebecca," and the husbands whereunto, according to the Greek ritual, they "stood betrothed now and for ever, even unto ages of ages," also entered their travelling-carriages—the Gallitzins for Warsaw, the Elvinstons to embark for England in their yacht. This infringement of the custom of prolonging the wedding-party by banquets and balls was held by some as a happy innovation, by others as a disastrous necessity; for these Russians seem to fancy that one can never have enough of a good thing, and renew the nuptial festivities at the close of a week, by the ceremony of what is termed "dissolving the crowns."

The two happy couples, however, seemed to think as I did, that of ceremonies we had enjoyed enough. I spare you the pathetic leave-taking. I spare you the oceans of champagne drained to their health and happiness—my headache of to-day being a confirmation of the same which

I should be sorry to aggravate by description.

I have executed all your commissions, my dear brother, and am coming to you like a Persian prince, charged with rough diamonds and conserve of roses, besides caviar, Russian leather, and other Tartarisms, enough to bring your appartement de garçon into rivalship with the Gastinoï Dvor. Thank Heaven, I can at length conscientiously write in place of au revoir—à tantôt!

Letter XXVII.—From Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau in Paris to the Viscountess Elvinston, London,

I AM, indeed, my dear young friend, as you justly surmise, au comble de mes vœux!

To be restored to the society of my dear Ida, in any country or station, would have afforded me unmixed satisfaction. I would have

followed her to Siberia—I would have followed her to your own Scotland, which, till now, always appeared to me scarcely less rude and inaccessible. I would have sought her in poverty—I would have sought her in shame; but to be summoned by her grateful affection to rejoin her in her present elevated position, and see her about to assume and dignify the high station of an ambassador's wife at the first of European courts, is a triumph as glorious as unexpected.

By Prince Gallitzin's desire, I hurried my journey, so as to precede them here, and flatter myself my exertions have not been uninstrumental in preparing the way for the ambassadress, whom we are daily expecting. I shall be able, I trust, to place my dearest Ida, au courant des affaires; and, young as she is, am not without hope, that she will go through the ordeal of the great world so trying at her age, with credit to herself and me. You desired me to write my first moment of leisure. I should have otherwise waited her arrival, to give you an

account of her looks, and presentation at court.

Though a court so new as that of St. Petersburg can have little in common with our throne of a thousand years' foundation, it is, perhaps, fortunate for Ida that, instead of being launched at once from the deserts of Schloss Rehfeld into the greatest of great worlds, she has experienced some inauguration into courtly ceremonial, and the throngs of polished life. The habits of St. Petersburg seem to approach more nearly to those of Paris, than the intermixture of stateliness and homeliness, which, like the chequers of a chess-board, characterize the German courts. The art of representation, my dear young friend, is one of greater difficulty and importance than is usually imagined; and I may venture to add, that it is an art peculiarly French, as requiring the exercise of intuitive tact and good breeding. Profound wisdom or great learning is inimical to its perfectionment; and no one will deny that a Parisienne, of whatever class, doing the honours of her salon, performs her task with better grace than — but I entreat your pardon!—I have not yet accustomed myself to remember that you have bestowed your hand on an Englishman.

Let me hasten, therefore, to meet you upon neutral ground. In order that you may favour me with a detailed account of your Northern domain, allow me to describe in all minuteness the future home of our

dear princess.

Figure to yourself a stately stone mansion, whose florid architectural ornaments affix its date half-way between the revival of the arts and Ducerceau, and the Grecianized era of Perrault and Gabriel; separated from one of the finest streets of the noble Faubourg by a spacious court yard, and having in the rear a garden, about the size attributed by Lord Elvinston's descriptions to your London squares; the stately old chestnut trees concealing the limits of which are now bursting into bloom, while the closely-mown lawn is brightened with a belt of lilac trees and double hawthorns, that appear in readiness to salute the new ambassadress with their fragrance.

Opening towards this charming lawn, and divided from it only by a terrace bordered with old orange trees, at one extremity of which stands a pavilion-shaped conservatory full of exotics—is the range of state apartments, seven in number, comprising a magnificent gallery parqueted with the rarest woods, and a salon, which the liberality of the emperor has adorned with a set of malachite and Labrador stone vases, five feet high, the finest ever yet seen in Paris. The embassy, being imperial property, has been recently refurnished in the most

costly manner; nor was it necessary to do more for the reception of the princess than place in her morning-room a few musical instruments,

and her favourite métier.

Do not imagine that the said morning-room constitutes a portion of the state apartments, which are appropriated to representation alone. It is, on the contrary, on the first floor;—the range of which constitutes the private residence of the ambassador's family. These apartments, I am assured by Monsieur de Vaudreuil's valet de chambre (who has just arrived bringing me letters from Madame la Baronne,) are infinitely finer than the suite d'honneur in the hotel of your legation in St. Petersburg; and in point of comfort, difficult indeed must be the person who could suggest a deficiency. Here, at no great distance from the morning-room to which I have alluded, a charming little chamber has been assigned to my use by the maréchal de logis, overlooking the garden and commanding access by a porte dérobée to Ida's dressing-room. I am already enjoying in anticipation the resumption of our happy colloquies of old. Installed as demoiselle de compagne of the ambassadress, I shall enjoy the happiness of instructing her in those etiquettes of the great world, with which the salon of the Hotel de Choisy rendered me familiar.

What a destiny for my lovely Ida! Paris, in its most charming form; Paris, without the claims of family responsibility; Paris, with a princely establishment, waiting only for its charming mistress to

assume her place at the helm!

Now that the trial is over, my dearest Lady Elvinston, I may fairly admit to you that Schloss Rehfeld, which I always regarded as a place of penance, has been this winter scarcely supportable. The worthy pastor, the good Sara, are not only beings of a sphere with which I am unfamiliar; but after they had ventured to discover blemishes in Ida and resent her mode of quitting them and wisdom in adopting her inevitable destinies, I preferred shutting myself up in utter solitude, and trusting for recreation to the arrival of your charming letters, than harass myself with the perpetual defence of what appeared to me to require no apology.

I should not have alluded, however, to my discontents, unless with the view of rendering you fully sensible to my overwhelming joy, at finding myself once more in Paris; enjoying the May sunshine of a climate whose very winters are fairer than the summers of the north. You, dear lady, who used to pine among the stoves of Germany for the sparkling fires of Paris, and a frankness of spirit and warmth of manner redoubling their geniality, will fully comprehend what it is to me to be restored to the tuneful intonation of my native tongue—to the courteous graces of life—and the sights and sounds of joyousness, which in Paris

convert the sands of the hour-glass of time into sands of gold.

The atmosphere appears so lightsome after the humid valleys of Silesia—the abord of every one I meet, so courteous—the bond of fellow-creatureship so cordially borne—that I am willing to subscribe to the opinion I have often heard expressed by my country people, familiar with the sorrows of exile, that one hour of life in Paris is is worth years elsewhere!

Ah! my dear Marguerite! they may talk of the patriotism of the Swiss and the influence of the Ranz des Vaches upon their feelings in foreign countries; but trust me, the cruelest maladie du pays is that which caused Madame de Staël, beside her dear lake at Coppet, to sigh for the kennel of the Rue du Bac; and which, whenever you used to

praise to me the Scandinavian forests of Schloss Rehfeld, brought before my tearful mind's eye the chestnut trees of the Tuileries, with the merry nursery maids at their feet, and the grey wood-pigeons circling over their stag-horned summits!

Farewell, my dear young friend. Your letters make me happy by certifying that your own happiness is secure. But now that it is no longer necessary to assure me of it, talk to me of your pleasures. By the time this reaches your hands, you will have quitted London, and

installed yourself in your new domain.

I entreat you, chère Marguerite, describe it to me. You know how we all doat on Walter Scott! Tell me whether you have found a Caleb Balderston in your seneschal (I once saw Caleb charmingly acted at the Variétés!), and whether there be a gipsy's camp, and Meg Merrilies at Elvinston Castle. Do you recellect our attempting Guy Mannering, with your cousin Alfred's aid, among the tableaux we got up at Rehfeld? How little did I then imagine, that either of my fair children was about to be banished to Scotland! But now that you have no more Pretenders, and no civil wars, the country has doubtless become less barbarous!

Make me known, I entreat, to your dear lord, and beg him to favour

our correspondence with his sanction.

# Letter XXVIII.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil in Paris to the Baroness von Rehfeld at St. Petersburg.

WHEN your hospitable kindness, my dear cousin, forced me, an unreluctant recruit, into your march to St. Petersburg, how wise was it to conceal from me the horrors of a southward journey on the break

up of winter!

Those who talk so fluently of the miseries of a Russian frost, omit the far less supportable abominations of a Russian thaw. But let bygones be bygones! If ever I publish an imitation of Bürger's "Leonore," my lines shall not run,

Tramp, tramp across the earth they ride, Splash, splash across the sea;

but

Tramp, tramp upon the ice they go, Splash, splash amid the thaw!

reserving the hearty hurral of the refrain for the final close of the

journey.

How glad you doubtless are to be rid of us all—how joyful that your utmost desires are accomplished! You may now hang up your fan in your dressing-room, as warriors of old appended their swords to the wall at the close of the war, and enjoy your laurels in comfort.

Never was there so brilliant a marriage—never so auspicious a celebration! Unless you have been poisoned ere this by the envious chaperons of St. Petersburg—and I should think a single dose of

tshshi soup,—(assist my orthography oh! power of Tartarus or Tatary,)—equal to a tankful of nux vomica,—you must admit that, with the richest son-in-law and most influential step-son-in-law going, you have arenged yourself on the injustice of the Fates in assigning your own youth to a Muscovite warrior, redolent of gunpowder, tshshi, and fish-oil. Forgive me!—had you not condescended to make me the confidant of your discontents on this head, I should not presume to be thus explicit.

But you have by this time been congratulated enough to feel as weary of congratulations as I of my journey. Pass we, therefore, to the fair Ida;—(a thousand pardons for naming her thus familiarly, even in the confidentiality of a letter)—pass we, I ought to have said,

to the new ambassador's wife.

How divine she looked, by the way, at the marriage ceremony; and by what a machiavellic stroke of coquetry did she contrive to conquer at a blow the whole Gallizin family, by appearing in that hateful costume, which would have rendered hideous any other face or form than her Hebe-like beauty. Poor Alexis! I could almost understand his despair. Perhaps it would have been better had you suffered him to follow his own devices, and return to his regiment on the eve of the wedding; for I fear that the various branches of your most Kalmuckian house of Erloff attributed his look and tone of desperation to resentment of his sister's alliance with a foreigner;—a mistake, under all the circumstances, little creditable to his understanding.

Lovely, however, as she looked at the altar, I can promise you that the Ida of that day was not worthy to tie the sandal of the Princess Gallitzin, who made her first appearance, last night, in the circle of the

petit château.

Right well can I understand the feeling of exultation, which, for the first time since I made his acquaintance, I detected lurking at the corner of Gallitzin's stony mouth;—though, sooth to say, it required all my hawkiness of eye to see my way through those bushy mustachios which form as effective a mask to his sentiments as a gorse-

covert to a fox.

By a stroke of female policy equal almost to that which suggested that most hideous of coifs, the pavoinik, for her marriage day, Princess Gallitzin made her first appearance at court in a stately robe of black velvet, with a garniture of grebe. I fancy I was the only person who presumed to remonstrate; for the Prince is the sort of a man who, if his wife chose to attire herself in the Gobelins hangings of her drawing-room, would never discover the mistake (and he was all the more judicious in perceiving the incompetency of our dear simple Marguerite to take her place by his side). As to poor Mademoiselle Thérèse, who, I verily believe, expected her taste as gouvernante to be prolonged, she has, I suspect, already perceived that her wand has lost its charm. On ascending her throne of domestic authority, the first declaration of our lovely despot in embryo was "Pétat, c'est moi!"

It was I alone, therefore, who ventured to instruct her, as you authorized me at parting, that by appearing at court in the month of May in fur and velvet, she would render herself a by-word in Paris: and I took occasion to call in the aid of the young Marquise de Montécourt (the Choisy élève of our poor Moreau), who was paying her a visit, to enlarge upon the merits of silks, sarsnets, muslin, and Mechlinlace, as the legitimate successors to satin, velvet, and point, which are,

of course, laid on the shelf till another winter.

To me, the Princess replied only by a smile of gratitude for her counsels. But, when Madame de Montécourt was gone, I was provoked to see that she not only smiled no longer, but persisted in her preposterous toilet. At length, I harassed her into an explanation.

"The Prince is desirous," said she, "that I should appear in the jewels presented to me by the imperial family. Diamonds, you assure me, are not de saison; and by assuming them with a demie-saison dress, I should make the error only more perceptible. Let my whole costume, therefore, be equally open to criticism. Your fair ladies of the château will like me only the better, on finding something in me to reform; nor do they expect me to arrive in Paris, from the confines of

Tartary, with Herbault or Victorine in my fourgon."

She was right—decidedly right! I seized the opportunity that very evening, to present my homage to the King and the Dauphine on my return from Russia; and can certify that never was there a more successful début!—" Charmante! ravissante!" resounded on all sides; and the exclamation that followed,—"how exquisite will she be, when she has learned to dress herself—how divine when mise à la française!"—proved that, by leaving something to desire and something to look forward to, the young ambassadress had supplied the one thing needful

to her popularity.

Imagine the lovely Ida, fairer, if possible, than ever, with a radiant circlet of brilliants glittering round her finely-formed head, and her snowy skin enhanced by contrast with the sable foldings of her robe—imagine her with that exquisite air of youth and purity which give her the appearance of having just stepped out of one of Schiller's ballads or Ossian's epics—imagine her with the vague but serene steadfastness of look that so admirably conceals the workings of her soul—the observed of all observers—in the midst of the frizzed, rouged, and haggard belles of the Pavillon Marsan, and the collets montés of the château! It happens that there has been nothing young or pretty here for ages, in the way of diplomacy; and I conclude the court had prepared itself for an appropriate partner to an ambassador of fifty-four; for on discovering the stranger to be a lovely child, they all looked disposed to take her into their arms as such, and welcome her with caresses.

No one, however, on a nearer acquaintance, will feel disposed to take liberties with Princess Gallitzin. Even Ida von Rehfeld had so far profited by my lessons as to have an opinion and position of her own. What other head of eighteen but had been turned by the brilliant success she commanded in St. Petersburg?—What other head of eighteen would have surmounted, as she did, the vexation of finding herself successively mistaken in her expectations of becoming Countess de Vaudreuil and Viscountess Elvinston; then, rallying from her mortification, turn upon us as she did?—Nay, what other head of eighteen would have remained insensible to the ardent passion of Alexis—so young—so handsome—so brilliant; and have eyes only for the statue of clay she has stamped with the impress of ambassador?

I say nothing of her prudent self-government when distinguished by the notice of the emperor; the nature of Nicholas's courtship being too admirably consonant with the climate of his dominions, to endow it with any very dangerous power over the feelings or deportment of its object.

ris object

No woman ever better appreciated her qualifications than Ida, when she renounced the roses of love for the laurels of diplomacy; for none was ever more calculated to exhibit the dignified attitude and acquire the measured tone adapted to the amplitudes of her new vocation.

At present, she has done all that time permitted—i. e., made a sensation; and who more aware than your charming self of the difficulty of effecting as much in this mercurial capital, where the wheels of the car of Fashion whirl so rapidly along, that it is all but impossible for any

new aspirant to dash into a place as it passes.

Princess Gallitzin has received no news from Marguerite since she quitted London. But we are in hourly expectation of despatches. In return, meanwhile, for this long letter, do me the favour to give me tidings of Alexis, whose state of mind, at the moment of our departure, caused me some uneasiness. Pray reassure me!—Tell me that he has, in some measure, forgotten the travellers, and that you deign to remember them.

# Letter XXIX.-From Viscountess Elvinston to Princess Gallitzin.

DEAREST SISTER—dearest friend—how sad and strange it seems to be addressing you from this vast distance; yet how great a comfort in my

sadness to address you at all!

At the moment of departure from St. Petersburg, amid the throng and tumult of those dreadful ceremonies, I was scarcely able to hold you a moment to my heart; and, strange to tell, so oppressed was I by the publicity of the scene and the crowd of strangers around me, that there was relief rather than the anguish I had anticipated in the moment of separation.

I lost sight of the grief of bidding adieu to mother, brother, sister, friend, in my release from the stare of hundreds; and the comfort of hearing only the voice which has never addressed me save in words of soothing and tenderness, reconciles me even to the word banishment.

Dear Ida, I am perfectly happy. You will believe me—you who witnessed my childish, my unadvised repinings; and appreciate the sincerity of my assurance, that had I selected my own destiny out of the whole world, I could have chosen none more perfectly adapted to my tastes and feelings. My new home, my new family, my new position, are such as must have rendered life delightful, even with a husband of moderate merit; but as the wife of a man with whom I could have lived contented in poverty and misery, judge what cause I have to rejoice in the manifold blessings with which Providence has brightened our existence. All I fear is that it is too bright—too happy;—that some sudden blow must overtake us, to modify a lot so far above the common requirements of humanity. I feel, dear Ida, as if I should wake some day from this dear and blissful dream, and find myself again bereft of the joys of affection.

But I have no right to weary you with the overflowings of my happiness; more especially till I learn from yourself that you are equally contented. Let me, therefore, restrict myself to an account of the

novel scenes which delight me in my new country.

In the first place, the voyage, to which I looked forward with such consternation, proved the most agreeable part of our journey. The

weather was delicious—warm, balmy, breathless April weather; and I, who had never before seen the vast ocean, and trembled at the mere idea of it as the scene of so many dreadful catastrophes and cruel deaths—I who expected to find it convulsed with the terrors of a tempest, almost wept for joy on finding it extended around me, blue, soft, smiling, with the aspect of a sky reversed, and the gentle welcome of a friend. I have seen my own Neva wear a far more terrible countenance. With such advantages, it is not surprising that I should have proved a capital sailor;—a great source of rejoicing to me, as Elvinston is so fond of yachting; and we have already planned an excursion for the summer, among the Western Islands. With such weather as we now enjoy, I can imagine nothing more enchanting!

Dear Ida! you are probably in daily communication with my cousin Alfred. Thank him, I entreat you, for the absurd and erroneous impressions he was at the trouble of giving me of London; for I am convinced he did it with kind intentions, resolved that my disappointment

should be of the most agreeable nature.

Do you remember, dearest, all he used to tell us of the opaque atmosphere of London, as often causing the lamps to be lit at noonday?—of the black waters of the Thames, which he described as a wider Styx?—of the snail-shell nature of the houses, each adapted, within half an inch, to the size of its family?—of the ceremoniousness of people next door neighbours for half a century, who, when a fire was consuming their houses, would not speak to each other amid the horrors of the confagration, unless a third person were present to introduce them in form?

Romance, dear Ida—egregious romance!—The London of MY impressions is as different from his as Paris from St. Petersburg! We arrived in the river before daybreak, and reached the majestic bend at Greenwich in time to hail the city ere the smoke of its fires deteriorated the beauty of a forest of spires; the mighty dome of St. Paul's hovering, as it were, presidingly over all. The scene was most imposing; and though the banks of this bright and sparkling river lacked the noble quays of the Neva to give them grace and dignity, Greenwich and Somerset Palaces sufficed to prove the groundlessness of his charge against the total deficiency of public buildings.

against the total deficiency of public buildings.

And then the bridges! What a triumph were it for St. Petersburg, if our wretched wooden bridges, the Izaak's, for instance, could be replaced by these noble granite causeways! How must those Russians who reach this country direct from their own, be startled on beholding, as a work

of the hand of man, the mighty span of Waterloo bridge!

Elvinston had made arrangements for our reception in a public hotel, his own house being incomplete. But experienced only in the comfortless disarray of those of St. Petersburg, I should never have guessed the Clarendon to be an hotel, unless apprized of the fact. All was as commodious there, and far more private, than at the legation. More misrepresentations of Alfred's! Do you remember what he used to say of English inns!—Believe me, Paris could not have afforded a better table, or more assiduous attendance!

But all these pleasing surprises are unimportant, compared with those that awaited me in my new family. My cousin had prepared me for sternness—reserve—severity. Even Elvinston, in his over-anxiety, thought fit to warn me against expecting any excess of warmth, assuring me that his sisters were shy to a degree which I might perhaps mistake

at first for want of kindness.

What they may be to the world in general, I pretend not to guess.

But heaven knows there was no shyness in their mode of adopting me at once as their own; while, in their reception of their brother, the tears streaming down their cheeks when clasped to his heart, proved that the coldness and reserve ascribed by Alfred to all English natives have no existence at least in the cheering atmosphere of a family circle.

The two sisters with whom I have made acquaintance, Mrs. Leslie and the Duchess of Rockingham, occupy stations in life wholly dissimilar, and entailing an utter contrast of duties and engagements;—the one being the wife of an official man of moderate fortune, whose marriage was facilitated by the liberality of her brother; the other, of one of the wealthiest of the aristocracy, whose resources, like my husband's, equal those of a German prince. The sentiments and manners of the two, however, were so exactly similar, that I have a right to accept them as an average specimen of the dispositions of my new family.

We dined, the first day, with Mrs. Leslie, who occupies a small house in an agreeable situation, the rooms of which resemble a succession of boudoirs, so snug and highly finished are their arrangements. We had only the Duke and Duchess of Rockingham, and a somewhat surly old gentleman, my husband's former guardian. After dinner, Mrs. Leslie's young child was introduced, and all was comfort and cordiality. I never saw more joyous mirth or more hearty affection than greeted the return of my husband to the bosom of his family. They all spoke French, fluently as natives, though with a foreign accent; but in a less unpleasant one (I may venture to say so to you, who speak it like a Parisian) than the accent of the Germans.

After dinner, the four gentleman engaged eagerly in a political argument, in English, which I had some difficulty in following. But I could see its importance in the inflection of their voices, and the mutable expression of their faces. I was deeply impressed, indeed, by the intelligence and energy suddenly unkindled in the countenance of my lord by a discussion of higher aim probably than any in which I had before seen him engage. He was no longer the uncouth man we used to presume to laugh at in St. Petersburg; no longer even the gentle and devoted friend, whose tenderness I have since found so captivating. But a man, full of thought and feeling, and giving energetic expression to both. I could see that he talked better and more convincingly than the other three, and never felt so proud or so happy!

I suspect that the old gentleman, Sir Thomas Meredyth, was not predisposed to see me with a favourable eye, at least, he was more silent than the rest, to me addressing not a word. But after the dinner, just after Mrs. Leslie's beautiful boy had been fetched off to bed, and was taken from my arms by the nurse, he suddenly walked up to me. snatched both my hands into his, examined me so steadfastly for a minute, as to dye my cheeks with crimson; and then imprinted a kiss upon my forehead, such as for the first time in my life inspired me

with the idea of fatherly affection!

The day following, the duchess took me with her to admire some of the finer points of London; the venerable abbey, of all the monuments I ever visited the most interesting, St. James's Park, the Regent's. But the thing that struck me most was the endless throng of people in the streets. Our present fine May weather was doubtless the cause of this; but you cannot figure to yourself anything equal to the crowd perpetually pressing onwards in the great thoroughfares, or the concourse of carriages which, on the Sunday we spent in London, was

visible from the windows of Mrs. Leslie, which overlook Hyde Park.

As it had been previously settled between myself and Elvinston, who was eager to reach his country residence, that I should not yet be presented at court, it was impossible for me to appear in general society, —a great relief, as you will readily believe, who know my aversion to public life. But there was no objection to our accompanying to the opera the duke and duchess, with whom we dined on the second day.

The "opera" here means exclusively the Italian, for a distinct English opera they have none; seeing which, they attach to it the diversion of the ballet, reserved in Paris as an embellishment to the national opera. The consequence is, that though the Italian opera is inferior in getting up and perfectionment to that of Paris, the entertainment is, on the whole, far more brilliant. The salle is of noble dimensions; the audience appear in full dress; and after my recent experience of the wretched Italian company at St. Petersburg, I was doubly able to appreciate the merits of the most accomplished singer I ever heard, with whom you are to be enchanted next winter at Paris, the celebrated

Madame Malibran.

That evening was the pleasantest I ever spent, Rockingham House is a residence such as I have sometimes dreamt of, but never before seen realized, combining the magnificence of the old hotels of the Faubourg St. Germain, to which I occasionally accompanied grandmamma, with a degree of comfort and homeishness that seems peculiar to this happy country. I made acquaintance with the duchess's girls, to whose education, in spite of the dignity with which she holds her place in the world as a grande dame, she devotes the most motherly attention, nor did I ever behold a simpler-minded or more happy family. They took so much pains to show me all that was best worth notice in their splendid gallery (which contains numberless chefs-d'œuvre, both of painting and sculpture, besides modern family portraits of still greater interest to me), that I was scarcely able to exchange a word with Elvinston till we were established at the opera. There, indeed, he remained with us the whole evening,-an attention which does not provoke in London the ridicule that would attach to it in Paris or Petersburg. But the duchess's box is a very large one; and in the course of the evening, many visitors were presented to me, whose names conveyed historical associations, and whose manners were as gracious and conciliating as What could Alfred mean, by those of the most courteous Parisian. calling these people habitually ill-bred?

Next day, I apprehended a grievous trial. It was my first Sunday in a Protestant country; and I watched the countenance of my husband, dreading to see it clouded by the consciousness that his wife pursued a different form of worship from himself. On the contrary, he rose with a more than usually cheerful face. The carriage was in waiting, at the proper hour, to convey me to the Chapel of the Bavarian ambassador, the most considerable place of Catholic worship in our neighbourhood; and on my return, I found Elvinston arriving from church with his sisters, in the kindest and happiest mood. I perfectly believe his assurance that our difference of opinion, on this point, is no obstacle to

his affection.

In the course of the morning we had hosts of visitors; for though the English church insists on a rigid observance of the fourth commandment, restricting public recreation as well as personal exertion the higher classes seem to repay themselves by making it the most sociable day of the seven. I was pleased with nearly all my new acquaintances, for all appeared to be warm friends of my husband; and far better pleased with his metropolis than my own. The number of brilliant equipages in the streets—the healthy aspect of the population—the air of independence perceptible in all its arrangements—every thing, in short, that met my eyes and reached my heart, filled me with joy and pride in my new country! Never, dear Ida, did I see so charming a mixture of perfect nature, yet perfect breeding, as in the manners of Mrs. Leslie and her sister. One feels them at once to be people with whom one could gladly pass one's life. How is it that the English possess, above all other people, the secret of inspiring one with trust?

I seem to have said so much of myself and my emotions, that I am almost ashamed of entering into the chapter of my country journey, and arrival here. As our correspondence will henceforth be uninterrupted, it may be as well perhaps to postpone the account till my next

letter. You shall not wait long for its arrival.

#### Letter XXX.-From Princess Gallitzin to Baroness von Rehfeld.

You will be growing anxious to learn, dear madam, the particulars of our reception at court. By my desire Mademoiselle Moreau apprised you of our safe arrival at Paris, and acknowledged the amiable letters which awaited me here. The courier who brought them necessarily preceded our slower progress by several days. Not that I accomplished the project suggested by my father of passing a night at Schloss Rehfeld, which must have occasioned a departure of thirty leagues from the road to no purpose, as I could derive no satisfaction from visiting, during the absence of my family, a place which it is more than probable I may never have occasion to see again.

Pray be so kind as to explain this to my father; to whom the prince may forget to mention the subject in the letter he is now writing to him, to convey such tidings as he desires to have mentioned to Count Nesselrode, rather than convey them to him in writing. As it was agreed between us at parting, there are other subjects of a still slighter nature, though perhaps equally important as political indications, which can be touched upon only in my private and confidential letters to yourself. Your own tact and experience will suggest how far it may be necessary to report them in the quarter where the results are most

essential.

On the morning succeeding our arrival, ere the prince had even solicited an audience for the delivery of his credentials, I had the honour of a visit from the English ambassador, either in deference to the letters of introduction addressed to him by Lord Elvinston, and his friends of the embassy here; or with a view to strengthen his diplonatic relations with the prince, by the promptness of his courtesy. I found him, at all events, an agreeable and intelligent acquaintance; and one whose visits, either in his public or private capacity, cannot be too often renewed.

In the course of the evening I received visits from the Austrian and

Spanish ambassadresses. In the former I found all you announced to me:—graciousness, high-breeding, and the remains of much personal attraction: but a generalising tone of hollow courtesy, characteristic of that usage of the world, fatal alike to intimacy and to the mistrust which you assure me is the next best thing with those whose sentiments and opinions we are intent upon discovering.

I shall not lose sight of your often repeated advice to me, to form no intimate friendships with the ladies of the *corps diplomatique*, which, at certain junctures, might produce painful embarrassment; and, in this instance, I experienced the necessity of your caution; for the matronly tone and captivating manners of Madame Appony would, under other circumstances, have engaged my immediate confidence.

The prince, on his return from the Tuileries, expressed himself more than satisfied with the graciousness of his majesty. He had previously passed a considerable portion of the morning with the minister for foreign affairs; and announced to me my own presentation for the following night—the court being on the eve of its departure for St. Cloud.

Even if not apprised by yourself of the excited state of public feeling here, and the jealousies consequent thereupon which have arisen in the royal family. I should have surmised, from certain peculiarities in the manner of Charles X., that he was in the state of feeling produced by having nerved himself for the discharge of obnoxious duties, and the assumption of an extreme line of conduct. My experience of the world is short, but it has been of late replete with vicissitudes; and I believe that, by descending frequently into the depths of our own hearts, carefully searching our motives and connecting them with the result, and the result with the seeming of others, we may learn almost as much of human nature as by an extended study of mankind.

From the moment Mademoiselle Moreau placed in my hands, as the solace of my dull hours at Schloss Rehfeld, La Bruyère and La Rochefoucault as a modern pendant to the works of Seneca and Cicero—which, during the lessons of the good pastor, were my favourite study—I took nearly as much heed of these things as poor Baron von Grünglatz of his insects and mosses; and with more profit, I hope, as regards the

business of life.

Had the circumstances of my birth or breeding favoured the development of my affections, I should, perhaps, have trusted for my guidance to other instincts. But loveless as I grew up—loveless as I soon saw myself fated to remain, a first object to no single human being, I can only be thankful to the dispositions of Providence, which have pointed out to my desires a sphere of enjoyment as boundless as that which Marguerite had been so fortunate as to discover in the pleasures of domestic life. But all this is irrelevant, and will consequently appear tedious.

To return to the king. In addition to his expression of forced and assumed positiveness, his countenance, I own, appeared to me less prepossessing than his manners, which are those of a formal old gentleman of the last century, inaccessible, I should imagine, to any other pleasures than the chase and the whist-table; and even those as a mere matter of routine. The enjoyments of kings must surely become as much an affair of duty and etiquette as the levee and the audience. I watched Charles X. after winning a game. His only thought in the triumph was to prove to Marshal L.—, his partner, that, by a different mode of play, it might have been made a double one.

I am not sorry that the court is about to proceed to St. Cloud. It

will afford me leisure for reconnoitring my ground; and I can assure you that, after our brilliant fêtes at St. Petersburg, and the distinguished tone of the imperial circle, there is nothing very attractive in the circle of the Dauphine; who, by the way, has far more the air of being daughter to the king, than her royal spouse, his son; for every word of her lips seems prompted by the nature of his majesty.

I never saw two persons less prepossessing; which is the more unfortunate for the throne, at a moment when conciliation seems to be essential, and when the family at the Palais Royal possess every quality not only to captivate, but to attach. I can scarcely permit myself to express my full admiration of the Duchess of Orleans and her charming daughters, remembering how cautiously you placed me on my guard

against giving way to such predilections.

Of Madame, the object of such vehement praises on the part of Count Alfred, and of some partiality on your own, I can at present understand nothing. To be well with the Pavillon de Marsan and the Pavillon de Flore is, I am assured, out of the question, (though the misunderstandings between them and their partizans may, possibly, produce results injurious to the interests of the throne;) and as the latter is the point to which my attention has been directed, it matters the less that I dislike the manners of Madame, as flighty, and her countenance, as disadvantageously recalling that of the empress. There is, moreover, an air of sarcastic impertinence prevalent in her circle, which, if indicative of high Parisian fashion, of which it is supposed to be the sanctuary, exhibits nothing to assist in diffusing the tenets of the sect.

The Italian Opera, which, of all the amusements of Paris, you recommended exclusively to my attention, is closed for the season; and as the prince judged it advisable that we should be seen as early as possible in public, we appeared last night in our box at the Académie

Royale.

My first exclamation on beholding the  $coup\ d'wil$  of the ballet, (for Rossini's Comte Ory was over before we were able to quit the first household dinner of the embassy,) was, "If the emperor and empress could only enjoy this spectacle!" Delighting as they do in even the poor specimen of a ballet which, when in St. Petersburg, my inexperience pronounced to be unique, because, dazzled by its splendour, I was blind to the imperfection of the corps de ballet—what would they think of the exquisite precision of Parisian dancing? What would they say to the indescribable Taglioni?

I was not, however, permitted to enjoy the ballet as I could wish. Prepared to appear afterwards at the soirée of the Duchesse de C—, it was impossible but that a new ambassadress in full dress should divide the honours of public curiosity with the stage; and the result was a succession of visitors to our box, too illustrious to be voted importunate, including the Duc de Chartres, the handsomest young man I have seen in Paris. Count Alfred, and an elder brother with whom he has made us acquainted, were with us the greater part of the evening; that is, till this royal visit gave a signal for the retreat enforced by etiquette.

I conclude that the brilliancy of a spectacle so new to me as this exquisite Paris Opera, of which I had read till I was tired of reading, and consequently fancied I could behold with indifference, had put me into spirits; for never did a circle of society strike me as so enchanting

as that of the Duchesse de C-

Already intimate with the prince during his diplomatic residence at the court of Naples, where the duke represented that of France, the duchess scarcely needed an introduction to place us on a friendly footing. On the contrary, it was she who successively presented to me all the ladies of her coterie, entreating me to honour them by my bonnes graces, in a tone to make me feel the compliment of the request.

I found them charming. Never did I see a little party so perfectly assorted. It was not the night of the duchess's weekly receptions, when she cannot be secure against a crowd; but aware that I could not be with her till after the opera, the party was invited expressly to meet me. No need for the prince to have announced to me beforehand that the clique of the duchess was composed of the clite of Paris. If there exist anything more agreeable or more distinguished than I saw last night, how miserably low must I fall in their estimation, and my own!

Neither Count Alfred nor his brother were invited to this party, which consisted of about twenty women and thirty men; all of whom seemed to understand each other like brothers and sisters, yet without the smallest demonstrations of familiarity. In what consists this marvellous secret—this wonderful charm of Parisian courtliness which is no longer of the court? All the ease and grace I missed au château, I

found in the circle of the Duchesse de C-!

I can now fully understand your assertion, that those who would acquire influence in Paris must found a salon. I perceive the importance of collecting a knot of associates, who, by their ramified connection with society, create an impression for one unseen, at once establishing one in the opinion of the world, and apprising one of its existence and variations.

The Duchesse de C—, your kinsmen informed me, is of all the ladies of the Faubourg the most exclusive. Though acquainted with her from their birth, for instance, the Vaudreuils have never received an invitation to her house: nor would they take the liberty of asking leave to present themselves. Yourself, I find (probably as only a casual resident in Paris), were not of her coterie. Yet so unexceptionable is her choice of associates, that even Count Alfred, so hard to please, had not a sa-

tirical comment to bestow on the salon of the Hotel de C-

Upon the hints which I received there, both advisedly and by means of my own observations, I have been conferring with the prince on the rules to be observed in the formation of my own society. There is every disposition, I see, on the part of this exclusive clique to appropriate me to itself. But the wide distinction between the accountable position of an ambassadress and the independence of the Duchesse de C——, renders such a limitation impossible. As the prince justly observes, we are here to extend and strengthen the interests of Russia, rather than consult our predilections or caprices; and accordingly, though my girlish appearance may have encouraged the duchess to instruct me somewhat too freely in the scandalous chronicle of the court, and to point out with too sweeping a hand the odiousness of the more liberal circles of the Faubourg St. Honoré, I must take an early occasion to hint the exigencies of my position, and beg her to respect my patience under whatever burden of ennui it may impose.

We are, in short, like all the other embassies here, to select a night; nay, we must accept that allotted, by concert with the other ambassadresses, to the prince's predecessor, for the reception of all persons, French or foreign, previously presented here, or sufficiently introduced. These will henceforward constitute the frequenters of our official soirées; but I am to be permitted a non-official night, when I may assemble round me the friends who are to constitute my salon—the

friends with whom the extensive European connection of the prince has brought him acquainted; those especially recommended to my friendship by the Countess Auguste on her return next autumn from

the country; and the society of the Hotel de C-

Our good Mademoiselle Moreau is anxious that I should inscribe in my list of intimates her patroness the Countess de Choisy, and her pupil the Marquise de Montécourt. But with all due respect for her qualities as institutress (but for which I should have scarcely selected her for the confidential post she now holds about my person), and the greatest regard for her feelings, this concession is impossible. To introduce into my intimate circle two persons who do not naturally belong to it, would be to mar the harmony of what I wish to secure from a single jarring particle.

My short experience of such matters in witnessing the formation of your own society in St. Petersburg, has warned me of the danger of admitting, in the first instance, any individual likely to give exception the rest of the set It is surprising, as I saw in the instance of Princess W—, how a single extraneous person will mar the good intelligence

of a coterie d'élite.

I have consequently declined; and our good Thérèse is beginning sufficiently to understand the alteration of our relative position and the strength of my determination, to have resigned herself without remonstrance. On Tuesday next my little soirées begin—the public ones being suspended during the summer season. In a few weeks more, when the weather becomes less agreeable, the prince proposes our removal to a charming villa he has engaged at Suresne. As you may suppose, its immediate vicinity to Paris will oppose no obstacle to the continuance of our parties.

Accept, dear madam, the assurance of my utmost consideration; and commend me affectionately to my father. Should inquiries be made of you concerning us, by persons whose remembrance were only too flatteringly gratifying, be pleased to answer that my regrets on quitting St. Petersburg could have been effaced only by the hope of devoting my future life to the service of those who have so condescendingly

honoured me with their good opinion.

#### Letter XXXI.-From Princess Gallitzin to Viscountess Elvinston.

DEAREST Marguerite, ten thousand, thousand thanks; not for your letter, for that obligation I had already commissioned our good Moreau (whose occupation in my establishment is to save me a world of trouble in letter writing) duly to acknowledge. My gratitude has a deeper origin; and again and again let me thank you for those lively regrets for your beloved Paris, which, more than all the previous enthusiasm of the worthy Thérèse (which I attributed to mere nationality), inspired me with an intense desire to establish myself in France.

But for you, who knows! I might have resigned myself to the dreary fate of accepting my cousin Wilhelm, and vegetating through life at Schloss Rehfeld—scarcely more alive than when ultimately mouldering in the yaults of our dreary old church; for, but for you, the hand

of the baron's daughter had never lost its value in the eyes of his successor.

I regard you, therefore, not only as my redemption from all evil, but my introductor to all good; for trust me, dear sister, the utmost you ever expressed to me in favour of the agrément of this place, falls far short of the charm I discover in its hourly increasing attraction. That you could have ever submitted to the dulness and homeliness of Rehfeld

after Paris, is to me, indeed, incomprehensible!

A toleration of St. Petersburg I could have forgiven you, for St. Petersburg has its merits; its ambitions to gratify, its difficulties to conquer. But for St. Petersburg, do not deny it, you entertained, although your country, a rooted aversion; and when others used to condole with you on quitting your native land as the sole drawback on your auspicious marriage, I was never hypocrite enough to join my voice to theirs, conscious that in that particular you saw little to regret; and still more certain that the domestic life of England was likelier to satisfy your requirements, than the blaze of courtly subservience, constituting in Russia a life of aristocratic distinction.

Nevertheless, dearest Marguerite, dream not that the Paris of your praise is the Paris of my delight. The blue sky seen from the garden of your beloved convent, the clear atmosphere, the early violets, or even your hours of recreation in the solemn Hôtel de Vaudreuil, would, I fancy, have failed to secure to me the satisfaction your simpler heart found in those simple pleasures.

I have visited your good sisterhood, Marguerite, feeling that it would yield them double delight to receive your noble gifts from the hands of one who had seen you so recently, face to face, and was able to answer their interrogations concerning the new destinies of their lost favourite. Worthy old souls are they, I admit! I believe the affection of Sœur Marie for her pupil to be greater than was ever felt for myself by any human being—my poor Sara included. But I cannot accept them in connection with those pictures of Parisian gaité de cœur, which you used to sketch for my amusement at Rehfeld; and which laid the foundations of a partiality, the means of eventually lodging me in the Faubourg St.

How often have I smiled aside, in former days, at the pragmatical air with which my good gouvernante used to pronounce that cabalistic name, sacred to her, as that of a Mecca in the ears of a Turk; and right well do I remember the instantaneous revolution of opinion respecting my father's marriage, produced in her mind by simple cognizance of the fact that the new baroness was issued of a noble house established in that thrice sanctified locality! To have found Madame von Rehfeld niece to the Pope, would, I am convinced, have proved a minor

recommendation!

Yet already I am beginning to understand this infatuation. In my solitude at Rehfeld I had dreamed of just such a world as I find enclosed in the heart's core of the aristocratic quarter of Paris; a world sufficing to itself-understanding itself-and great in its littleness, because defying the innovations of greater greatness. You have no conception of the unapproachability of its one magic coterie. imperial circle at St. Petersburg is not more immaculately exclusive; but the imperial circle of St. Petersburg possesses, Heaven knows, little to recompense the ardour of those adventurous Titans, who might be disposed to heap Ossa on Pelion, in order to scale its lofty beatitudes.

How strange it seems to write thus freely and frankly, when anything imperial is in question! But, laud we the gods, we are no longer in Russia. You, dear Marguerite, are an inhabitant of a land all but law-lessly free; and as regards our relative position, already "I have unclasped to thee the book even of my secret thoughts," and will continue to unclasp it; secure that not a word that ever passes from my pen to your eyes, will thenceforth transpire to the ear or eye of any other person. As regards your lord, indeed, at my request, he gave me a sacred promise to respect our correspondence, in requital of all the patience with which I bore with the rhapsodies of his courtship, and pleaded his cause.

From all I have said in honour of your and poor Moreau's beloved Faubourg, you will naturally infer that it pronounces an equally gracious verdict on myself. Your cousins, Alfred and his charming brother, who are completely established in the diplomatic circles, assure me that I am to rival in popularity Madame Appony. It is not, however, popularity that will satisfy my ambition; I must have influence. The most popular people are often, nay usually, the least influential. Influence is the evidence of superiority; while mediocrity is one of the main sources of popularity. The world is composed of mediocre people; and we rarely affection those who rise superior to

our own level.

I repeat, therefore, that I must have influence. I must have it for the sake of the prince, and for the sake of my own pleasure. Were I

not entitled to it, I should not experience the desire.

De Retz has told us that it is a vulgar policy to descend to littleness, in order to achieve greatness; and I am determined to achieve the top of the pyramid, by stooping to it like an eagle, not by crawling a slow and miserable ascent. My first object, therefore, will be to show myself

superior to the situation I have attained.

When I reflect that, scarcely a year ago, I was lost in the tedious obscurity of Rehfeld (which I scarcely estimate a life worth living)—when I remember that my utmost ambition then, was to preside supreme in the unrefined circles of the Residenz, branded with the indelible impress of mediocrity,—when I consider that even this poor ambition, the result of my inexperience, was blighted by the marriage of my father, which reduced me even in my own home to utter insignificance; and behold myself now—now as I am—and still more, as I intend to be. I can scarcely venture to surmise what time, so fertile in

change for me, may have in store!

For do not imagine, dear Marguerite, that I enjoy in Paris merely the delicious laissez aller of its graceful existence. However enchanted by the majestic halls of the Tuileries, or the smooth level of daily society in the succession of charming salons to which I am introduced, to me this capital has a twofold existence. I admire the brilliant Operahouse—the Champs Elysées crowded with equipages, the motley boulevards—the noble hotels; I find myself surrounded by lovely idolatresses of fashion, whose every change of dress would flutter the heart of our poor empress; I accept the homage of the courtly, and listen with pleasure to a piquant edition of the last bon-mot reported by some idler of the English Club, or some étégant of the Hôtel de C——. But amid all this, I do not lose sight of the Paris of my studies—the Paris of my dreams—the Paris of the olden time, where woman was a presiding influence—where even her beauty was rendered subsidiary by her intelligence; when queen-regents carried the day against ministers and

cardinals; and when the opinions of the age were concocted in the

salons of women, rather than in the library of the sage!

This national character cannot surely have passed away. - With all that has been done to alter the nature of the French by the terrors of a revolution, and the subsequent durance of a military despotism-young France is always the child of old France; and the Paris of to-day must retain the features of the Paris of yesterday, just as in the gallery at Rehfeld, precisely the same countenance is discernible under the court suit and periwig of my grandfather, which assumed a sterner air in the mailed vesture of the Barons von Rehfeld of the middle ages.

The apparent levity and frivolity of the Parisians conceal a world of tact and finesse; and, as the wily angler ascertains his success by watching the float that dances demonstratively on the surface of the stream, those who aspire to succeed in the rapid current of French society, must note with care the slightest demonstrations of its surface.

It is not here as at St. Petersburg. Dress, vanity, pleasure exercise there an influence so powerful as to crush all higher purposes. Here, dress, vanity, and pleasure appear to occupy the same space: while, in reality, they resemble our German quilts of eiderdown, able to supply warmth and covering, by expanding into an article of furniture; but susceptible of compression into a pocket size, to be concealed from sight till occasion for their reproduction again presents itself.

Observe, my dearest Marguerite, how readily I fall into the error of female correspondence, by writing to you out of the abundance of my heart, although my letter will touch no answering chord in your own! Revenge yourself! I confess to you that, hitherto, I have experienced little sympathy with your petticoated Highlanders. But give me a full account of your new habits of life; and I promise you to peruse it with interest and pay it with the same.

A thousand compliments to your lord. Tell him to like me more steadily as a sister than he did as a friend; and for the present both of

ve. farewell!

# Letter XXXII.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to the Count Erloff, Moscow.

WERE it not for the power of conveying my letters to you under the safeguard of our diplomatic seal, my dear Leck, not even your solicitations would beguile me into the bore of so shaping my words as to meet with decorum the eye of your imperial chef de police. But I fancy I am pretty safe, and accordingly comply with your strangely urgent request.

Now that all is over, and we have each accepted our oyster-shell, while the hard-headed and hard-hearted diplomat carries off the oyster, you are beginning to do me justice. Let me do you *more* than justice in return, by the superfluous candour of explaining the exact state of my feelings, past and present, and, as far as I can guess, future, towards your fairest of step-sisters.

To begin with the beginning, I am not, either by nature or birthright, a marrying man. I have too sincere a regard for myself to share with another either my limited fortunes or boundless liberty, when I can enjoy it all to myself. In Paris, as a cadet de famille of honourable name and tolerable appearance, I possess means of enjoyment such as the gods might envy. But the enjoyments which gods are said to envy, often become insupportably monotonous to mere mortals; which is the only excuse I can give for having attempted that absurd expedition to Germany, which ended in freezing my soul out six bitter months in your imperial ice-house, by the side of the

ambitious Ida.

After visiting Carlsbad and Töplitz for the diversion of my ennui, I was pleased with the idea of pressing a kindred hand in the deserts of Saxony, little imagining that my presence at Rehfeld, at the moment of my fair cousin's inauguration in her new château, would bring me acquainted with a prettier, wittier, and more piquante little person than I had left behind in all the angelic coteries of the archangelic Faubourg. In your step-sister, as I first beheld her, there was something irresistibly attractive. The almost celestial purity of her complexion and girlishness of her air, inspired me with visions more poetical than altogether became my vocation as a roue, of the ethereal origin of

the sex.

How long the illusion lasted I can scarcely take upon me to remember; just as long, however, as I believed the simplicity of her nature to equal the simplicity of her appearance. On the poor child, her father's marriage had fallen like a thunderbolt; and pitying her as a victim, and disposed to convert pity into protection, I was, I admit, a moment thrown off my guard. I saw that I had made a prodigious impression on the youngest heart which had ever fallen within the range of my

attractions, and was not displeased.

Heaven knows to what excess my weakness might have been carried, for in pretending to perfect her education and correct her tastes, at your mother's express desire, I was beginning to perfect my own. But it suddenly suggested itself to me, or if the truth must be told, I fancy it was suggested to me by the baroness, that this seemingly simple girl was far more ingenious than ingenious; and that heart-sick of her subordinate position and wild to visit Paris, which a cleverish old maid of a governess had rendered the Loretto of her adoration, she was

bent upon entrapping me into an offer of my hand.

A Countess de Vaudreuil on a third floor in the Rue de Grenelle, would be, I admit, a woman far more deserving envy than a Baroness von Rehfeld, Rehfeld born, united to a Saxon clodpole. But any countess in whose favour I might be tempted into sacrificing my prospects in life, must be one who renounces, for my sake, a German principality or Neapolitan duchy, not a girl who accepts me on so villanous an alternative. I hardened my heart, therefore, and had no mercy. I probed the little manœuvrer to the quick, by thenceforward restricting my attentions as in kinsmanship bound, to Marguerite (who, by the way, regarded them far less gratefully than the homage of the clodpole aforesaid, who used to look idylls at her and sigh Goethisms, from morning till night); while Ida, by her mode of resenting, rather than feeling my desertion, convinced me that your mother's assertions were well grounded: that some hearts are born old, some crippled by education; and that the Lily of Rehfeld, in spite of her limpid eyes and alabaster skin, possessed the decrepit soul of a card-playing old dowager.

How could one persist in loving such a girl? I determined to grow

How could one persist in loving such a girl? I determined to grow indifferent, and did not succeed. I determined to detest her, and succeeded better; for it is easier to pass from one extreme to another

than pause midway. But, between hating and loving, my feelings were of so strange and intermingled a nature, that I could not refrain from playing the will-o'-the-wisp with her when occasion offered; and will not deny that I had all the share of which you accuse me, in inducing

her to become the wife of Sergius Gallitzin.

I saw that Marguerite could never be happy with such a man. Her tender and affectionate nature seemed to demand the solace of domestic life and mutual affection, incompatible with his worldly nature; and when so brilliant and auspicious an opportunity for her establishment in life presented itself in the generous attachment of Elvinston, it afforded me no small satisfaction to behold her fortunes far overtower those of her ambitious step-sister.

At that moment you made your appearance at St. Petersburg; stung almost to madness by the increasing perplexities of your situation; detesting your mother's marriage, yet having deprived yourelf, by your own indiscretions, of the right of remonstrance. The moment I saw you I determined to enlist your good offices in favour of my friend Elvinston, against the whining, fleecy-headed Werther, whom I suspected of having insinuated himself at Rehfeld into your sister's good graces. But I soon found my interference superfluous. Your unlucky position at that moment rendered it indispensable that Marguerite should release her dowry and sacrifice her girlish chimeras, by becoming the wife of one of the richest subjects in Europe, and one of the best

fellows in the world.

So far, so good. I was content. Your difficulties were removed, and so were Elvinston's. But I had not yet forgiven Ida, who was assuming towards me at St. Petersburg a beauty's privilege of impertinence. Satisfied that Gallitzin, who is so cunning a calculator, and had aspired to your sister's hand chiefly as the daughter of a deceased favourite of the late emperor, and living favourite of the present empress, would discern nothing to forward his interests in an alliance of a Mademoiselle von Rehfeld, I lost no opportunity to dazzle her eyes with pictures of the brilliant position Marguerite would have enjoyed as his wife. I spoke of Paris as even old Thérèse had never spoken; I described the Faubourg society as she was unable to describe it; and, by degrees, raised such a ferment of vanity in her brain as effaced all stronger sentiments, like the sea-foam frothing over some mighty wreck.

I admit, my dear Alexis (in the confederacy of sexhood forgive the confession)! that I was enchanted to find that hard head softened by mortification, as well as that soft heart hardened by worldliness; for a girl of eighteen who dares to be ambitious deserves, in my opinion, the

condemnation of the fallen angels.

Judge, therefore, of my vexation, when at that moment the sudden notice of the emperor imparted new life and bloom to the broken stalk of the Lily of Rehfeld! It was rumoured by the spiteful tongue, I suspect, of Princess W—, that the whole was a master-stroke of your mother's policy; and that, discerning your wild passion for her step-daughter, and intent upon banishing her from Russia, she contrived to draw such attention to the very singular nature of her talents and accomplishments, as, in the sequel, convinced both the emperor and his favourite that a more auspicious ambassadress could not be selected.

Others affirm that the discovery was made by the prince; that his choice of a bride of eighteen, fairer than Hebe, was a mere cold-blooded act of calculation; and that the acquaintance of Nicholas with Mademoiselle von Rehfeld aroso solely from his desire of personally esti-

mating her qualifications to become the wife of a man whom he regards as one of his most efficient servants. Be it as it may, the result was the singular realization of Ida's utmost pretensions,—my own discomfiture as a strategist—and your despair as a lover. I was taken in my

own toils, as you in hers.

You are, therefore, so far right in asserting me to be the origin of what you term this hateful marriage, that I was the means of inspiring Princess Gallitzin with a passion for Paris, which has brought her where she is, chez nous, et chez elle. But you do me too much honour—or dishonour—in the far-sighted designs you impute to me. As one of the family, I dare avow to you without shame that, throughout the affair,

I have been far more the dupe than the duper.

For your own feelings I can make due allowance. Through life you have had much to harass—much to irritate. The ruin of an honourable father—his despair—his death, produced by the extravagance and levity of his wife, form, I admit, a sufficient plea for the lapse of filial respect which characterizes your last letter. Had you ever possessed a happy home, you say: had you, on attaining to maturity, found a parent on whom to lean for counsel, you should never have fallen into the excesses which, I fear, may yet produce a pernicious influence on your career, should some of the innumerable spies, with which your delectable court abounds, convey to the ear of the emperor the secret cause of your sister's marriage.

To do him justice, the affection of Nicholas for the memory of his brother, and the memory of those who loved and served his brother, is more likely to render him a stern than a partial judge in such a cause.

Not to dwell, however, upon evils you have bitterly regretted and follies you bitterly repent, I can only too well understand the conflict in your mind, when, on your arrival here, full of indignation against your mother, full of hatred against the Rehfelds, prepared to oppose every concession offered you, resent every counsel, and insult every member of the family, you discovered by the very hearth-side to which you brought your rage and indignation, a being so exquisitely gifted as the lovely Lily. From all she appeared to me at Schloss Rehfeld, I can estimate all she may have seemed to you at St. Petersburg.

I am satisfied that your mother, with her usual doubleness of dealing, entreated, on perceiving the irritation of your mind, the aid of her step-daughter in conciliating her rebellious son. Idaloves to be enlisted in a cause—loves to be made a party to a stratagem; and you must excuse me if I attribute many of the attractions on which your letter so forcibly enlarges, to the assiduity with which the cold-hearted beauty fulfilled the letter of her instructions; and, like some virgin in a magic tale, conquered by the force of her charms the feroicty of a sayage

assailant.

All I can now say in the way of exhortation, is, "resume your affections as hastily as they were lavished." I am convinced that Princess Gallitzin has not bestowed a thought upon you since she quitted St. Petersburg. Such an assertion may excite your indignation; but honesty is not only the best policy, but in this instance the truest

friendship.

All her care is to maintain her consequence here, and the influence of the prince with the government at home. To fulfil, or if possible forestal their letters of instruction from St. Petersburg, is the study of her life; and were you to see the address with which this syren of eighteen—this dove with the guile of the serpent—has managed to conciliate the

persons acceptable to the present policy of the Russian cabinet, you would admit that the admiration conceded by the diplomatic world to Talleyrand at eighty, ought in her instance to be increased a thousand

fold.

I use the word "admiration" here in the sense of "wonder:" having little affection for feminine policy. Let the lovely creatures conquer, perforce of the brightness of their eyes and coral of their lips. Any excess of brains in the charming head of a pretty woman is, after all, miserably de trop!

Let me hear of your speedy recovery, therefore, as you value my

cousinly good opinion.

# Letter XXXIII.—From Viscountess Elvinston at Woolsthorpe Park, to Princess Gallitzin in Paris.

I SHOULD be afraid dearest Ida, of incurring the charge of egotism, did you not persist in expressing your desire that I should acquaint you with all I see, hear, and perhaps misunderstand of my new country; for I have little doubt that your clear intellect will form truer deductions than my own, from the bare facts I record for your amusement.

I told you of our safe arrival here. The gratifying manner of our reception I should hesitate to describe, but that it conveys a mere tribute of affection to the person of my husband, and deference to his family. On reaching the confines of the Elvinston estates, in Yorkshire, we were met by an assemblage of his chief tenants on horseback, wearing wedding favours, who escorted us homewards as a guard of honour.

In many of the villages through which we passed, rustic arches of triumph had been erected, ornamented with evergreens and flowers by the hands of the people; and I must admit that the finest architectural monuments of Paris or St. Petersburg never afforded me half the gratification I derived from these rude attempts at design, with their misspelt inscriptions, and equivocal perpendicular. The really splendid one constructed at the entrance of the park, by the zeal I conclude of Lord Elvinston's steward, which was decorated with rich white banners inscribed with my name, and bridal festoons of rare white exotics, pleased me far less than the rougher attempts of the peasantry.

I have seen these sort of public demonstrations in Paris, where they are said to be organized by the intervention of the police; and in St. Petersburg, where loyalty is inculcated with so iron a hand, that you have to choose between devotion to the emperor—and Siberia! But in this land of freedom, where all sentiments, public or private, are spontaneous, it is delightful to be able to rely on the sincerity of similar

tokens of affection.

Lord Elvinston is, I am satisfied, an excellent landlord. He tells me, with a smile, that he is simply the descendant of those who have been good landlords in their time; and that his guardian, Sir Thomas Meredyth, is just now better entitled than himself to the huzzas of his tenants. For my part, I see no use in too curiously analyzing the origin of people's affection. In this world it is so primary a happiness to be loved, that I am content to accept the sentiment without examining its genealogy.

Dearest Ida!—If you could only behold the landscape lying beneath my windows! But you will see it. The prince will not refuse us the happiness of a visit, when the length of his sojourn at Paris entitles him to leave of absence. Meanwhile, let me attempt to describe it, by way

of temptation.

You may remember how genuine was my admiration of the fine environs of Schloss Rehfeld. The English landscapes, more contracted, possess all the verdant beauty I have seen even you admire in the landscapes of Hobbima; and though your forests are, I still admit, magnificent in extent, to behold fine timber-trees you must visit our English parks. Many of the oaks in our own, are of three hundred years' well attested antiquity, and consequently in their pride;—nor can you imagine anything richer than the masses of noble trees with deer herding around them which overshadow the valleys and crown the acclivities of Woolsthorpe—a spot singularly favoured and diversified by the hand of nature.

A sparkling river, the Greta, runs through the grounds, concealed from sight in parts by rocky banks, which impart double grace to the ornate richness of the surrounding scenery. The greensward of the park which, till the time of Henry VIII. was attached to a noble monastery, the ruins of which constitute one of the chief ornaments of the landscape, had then been several hundred years enclosed, and is fine as velvet. Altogether, I had scarcely imagined that nature could wear, in any time or place, so holiday a suit. When I reflect upon the rugged environs of Paris, the formal roads, the brushwood of the Bois de Boulogne, and the frightful and unclothed country through which we reached it from Germany (most sadly controverting the name of labelle France),—when I think of the rudeness, imposing as it was, of your simple Saxony, it appears to me that the choice bit of landscape I am now contemplating must resemble the garden planted by God himself when earth was all innocence and peace!

For it is not alone the vast sweep of the park, with its groves of elm and beech, and ferny dells dotted with ancient thorns to which the deer love to resort at this balmy season, which constitute the resemblance. Nearer home, close to the house, there is a flower garden rich beyond all that even my wildest imagination had conjectured of floral beauty. Every plant I ever saw cultivated elsewhere as strange and rare, here abounds; for the English spare neither cost nor pains in gathering from the farthest countries of the world the treasures of their vege-

tation.

Well do I remember your disappointment, on visiting the winter garden of St. Petersburg! All you had heard of the colossal dimensions of that unique conservatory was exceeded by the truth. Yet we were forced to agree that the growth of the plants did little honour to so grand a locality; while as to the tropical birds so often described as domesticated among the branches of their appropriate trees, the poorest aviary of Paris has a better claim to admiration; a few sickly parrots, lories, and bengalees affording little embellishment to the spot.

The conservatories surrounding two sides of the mansion (here so that the windows of the drawing-room and breakfast room open into them as to a garden), though of less magnificent dimensions, afford a far more enchanting spectacle; being carefully filled and refilled from the larger conservatories of a distant garden. Not a plant ever meets my eye but in its fullest effulgence of bloom;—and such plants—such

flowers !- One might fancy them the creation of a fairy tale!

The house is of what is called here Elizabethan architecture, semigothic and of great dignity. Elvinston informs me that the purists in taste of his county found great fault with the erection of the conservatories, by his father, as deteriorative to the symmetry of the mansion. But the late Lord Elvinston made the sacrifice to the passion for flowers of his wife; asserting the right of the proprietor of a house to study his own pleasure as an inhabitant, rather than that of casual spectators. And thanks be unto him for the concession! for never do I come down to breakfast to enjoy a garden vista defying all changes of weather or temperature, without emotions of gratitude. It is so delightful to have

our dearest enjoyments thus brought home to us!

The apartments are adorned with exquisite pictures. A Claude, a Titian, a Ruysdael, a Giorgione, a Carlo Dolce, a Dominichino, each a chef-d'œuvre, decorate the room in which I am writing. Where is the mansion of the Faubourg St. Germain or the French château you will find thus richly adorned? Where can you point me out a noble private library, such as the one eighty feet in length, which I now behold in perspective, cool, quiet, inviting to study; a few bronzes, a pair of magnificent globes, and the stately jasper vases dispatched hither from St. Petersburg by my husband, alone diverting the eye from its long and galleried ranges of sober book-cases, and the solid central tables covered with portfolios of engravings or writing materials. When I remember the half-furnished and barrack-like libraries of the few great houses I had an opportunity of visiting in Russia, I am forced to admit that we have but roughly imitated the English model which, in this respect, we pretend to excel.

The dining-room is vast and solemn, as befits a dining-room, which ought to borrow its brilliancy from the table, as a theatre from the stage. It is hung with hunting pieces by Snyders and Hondekæter, with portraits of the late Lord and Lady Elvinston and their son, by Lawrence, at the head of the room, the complete series of family portraits being at the seat in Scotland, the cradle of this ancient line. The panelling of the dining-room is of oak, richly carved, more especially that of the recesses appropriated on festive occasions to the display of hunting cups

and gilt plate.

When I first entered this chamber, I thought it dull and dispiriting, and missed the marble and scagliola, which appropriately adorn the banqueting halls of my own country. But a moment's reflection, and Elvinston's representations, convinced me that a warmer style of decoration is fitter for this climate, which neither requires the stove warmth, indispensable in Russia, nor demands much consideration for the warm months which, alas! for the credit of English taste, are chiefly spent in the metropolis. Its dulness, moreover, though doubtless dispelled by the lighting up of the gilt chandeliers which overhang the table, concerns me little; for we have a snug suite of rooms for domestic use, the dining-room of which overlooks a beautiful flower garden, and is freshened at will by a marble fountain fronting the windows.

The chief distinction of Woolsthorpe in my foreign eyes consists in the multitude and elegance of its bed-chambers. Our summer châteaux

are, by comparison, sadly naked and meagre.

You can imagine nothing, indeed, more elegant and commodious than these little suites, the chief of which would constitute, in Paris, "un appartement richement décoré et orné de glaces."

Such, dearest Ida, is the home you have insisted on my describing; the almost regal home, for I can call to mind nothing but St. Cloud to

which it bears any resemblance; and even then, it is St. Cloud united with Neuilly, and placed in the middle of the park of Versailles, on the

verge of the wild scenery of Fontainebleau.

Is this not really a paradise? And yet, how feebly does even that word convey an impression of its beauty of scenery, its luxurious domestic arrangements, its appropriateness to the comfort of inmates of all classes, the exigences of the climate, and the habits of the country!

At present, however, the said climate wears so smiling an aspect, that I have no longer faith in the assertions, or, as my husband calls them, fables of my cousin Alfred, that its rigorous winter would be all the better borne for our double casements of St. Petersburg, or the substi-

tution of your German stoves for our vast chimney-pieces.

I never enjoyed mere luxury of weather, indeed, till I experienced summer warmth in combination with the variable skies of England, in which the overclouded sun seems to possess a natural screen, enabling

one to enjoy its beams at leisure.

An evening stroll in the flower-gardens or extensive shrubberies of Woolsthorpe, in one of which is a transparent lake, the dotting islands of which, at this season of the year, brightened with blooming American shrubs, reflect themselves in the still water, would fairly reconcile you to the climate of England. At this moment, I can imagine you returning from an airing in the Bois, your dress covered with dust, your eyes smarting from the glare of those chalky fields, whose sickly herbage and pale foliage bear evidence of the plastery soil below, the sky all glare, the landscape all exhaustion, while human nature shrinks from the influence of such scorching summer heat!

Here, on the contrary, all is freshness and repose. Every sense finds unmingled enjoyment. But you will call me an enthusiast, dearest Ida, a charge which, heaven knows, you never made against me before!

Two words more—the villages, the rustic population! You can figure to yourself nothing more pastoral than the hamlets niched into wooded dells among the corn-fields, each freshened by a brawling brook, and revealed in the distance by a simple spire, the humble houses of which, I admit, would make a better study for the philanthropist than the artist: for comfort and decency are really picturesque.

I cannot endure fanciful villages, such as one sees in the seigneurial village of St. Petersburg, or at the royal Petit Trianon, with which you are by this time familiar. A village ought to look as if made to labour in, pray in, love in, live in, die in, humbly, but honestly; whereas your picturesque Swiss chalets and kiosks, when introduced into foreign

countries, are to me a mockery of poverty!

You will, perhaps, be angry, dear sister, that I should have enlarged so mercilessly upon my new belongings (which, believe me, I admire not an atom the more that I have even a share in the possession), as to leave myself no room for replying to your questions concerning the state of parties in England. You well know how little I understand, or have ever concerned myself about such things. Even Elvinston is accused by his family of being still shamefully deficient in political zeal or knowledge. It is fit, however, he owns, that he should redeem his lost time. Next year he will take his seat in Parliament; and then I promise to devote myself to such studies as may enable me to answer your questions.

Even as regards the popularity of the Russian minister here, I am unable to reply. As a Russian born, I should scarcely like to ask a question of either of my sisters-in-law, which they might hesitate to answer, if the reply were likely to be unsatisfactory. I have heard Elvinston assert that Prince Lieven-but it is needless to repeat obser-

vations of which you were an ear-witness as well as myself.

We are to remain in this fair and prosperous spot till the beginning of August, when we repair to Elvinston Castle for the opening of the chase, which is there called moor-shooting, to distinguish it from the tamer sports of the South.

Before that time, however, dearest sister, pray write to me, and continue to give me the same flattering accounts of your health and happi-

ness which have completed my happiness in my new country.

#### Letter XXXIV.-From Princess Gallitzin, in Paris, to Viscountess Elvinston.

THANKS, dear Lady Elvinston, for your charming account of London. I have been trying to convert to your favourable mode of viewing it one or two of the diplomatic intimates of my society, who have been formerly martyrized by a residence at the English court. But, alas! the London of their inventions differs widely from the London of yours.

It is, however, as natural you should see it en beau, as that I should be enraptured with Paris. The charm of novelty goes for much; the delight of associating with those in whom we inspire only sentiments of good-will and admiration for more. Both of us are enchanted with what we see, because those we see appear to be enchanted with ourselves.

Our time has been passing most agreeably. As yet, none of the corps diplomatique have lest Paris; and the summer soirées continue on so easy a footing, that I often repair to them en demie toilette after a drive in the Bois or the Champs Elysées. Whist and conversation form the sole diversion of these meetings, unless, when, now and then, a déjeûner dansant enlivens the villas of the envirous.

At these villas we also enjoy frequent dinners. The Princesse de Montmorency has a delightful park at Auteuil; your countrywoman, Princess Bagration, one at Suresne; the Austrian ambassador one at Bellevue. In addition to these pleasant houses, we have dined with the royal family at St. Cloud, and the Duke of Orleans at Neuilly, and are invited to spend a week with Madame at her more distant Château of Rosny.

During my first fortnight in Paris, the Duchesse de C--- was constantly compassionating me for the publicity of my position, both as an

ambassadress and a stranger.

"At present, I fear, you must feel uncomfortable from standing out so prominently in relief," said she. "At present, my dear, you are printed in italics. But the misfortune will not last. We French are ill-bred enough to have a terrible vocation for running after novelties and staring at strangers. You soon will subside into one of us, and enjoy that enjoyment above all others, of passing unobserved with the mass and following your own devices."

I scarcely liked to admit to my new friend that I saw no great attraction in such a prospect. The consummation, however, appears no nearer than at first. I am still not only followed by the throng whenever our showy equipage is in request for some royal dinner-party; but every time I appear in private society, groups of new acquaintances thicken and close around me, striving who shall first interest my attention. Half of this assiduity arises from curiosity. The Parisians are surprised to find a foreigner—a German especially—speaking their language and versed in their ideas, as though born in the Faubourg and bred at the Sacré Cœur; and I suspect that many of the earnest efforts made to engage me in conversation purport the amiable design of finding me, on some point or other, at fault.

There are, as Princess W——apprised me, a few Russians of distinction settled here, and many more constantly in transit through Paris, chiefly pleasure-lovers, enamoured of the gay boulevards and brilliant theatres, which, to me, constitute its smallest attraction. Here, as wherever else they travel, they form a prominent feature. Their riches and recklessness font parler d'eux, and not always as favourably as one could wish; for, though the finest jewels at court are usually borne on Russian brows and uniforms, and the richest equipages and best opera-boxes appropriated to their owners, there is sure to the some strange anecdote attached to each—some trait of eccentricity or remnant of barbarism—

to degrade them in the critical eye of Parisian refinement.

Still, they are mostly agreeable—and doubly agreeable to me, as forming my natural satellites in this country. If it be the pleasure of others, it is their business to pay me their court; nor can I accuse them of any want of prodigality in their homage. On my arrival I was forced to encounter a round of official dinner giving and enduring with these people, and was easily reconciled to the duty, on learning that, but for the Russian habit of resorting to the German baths before the leaves are on the trees, I should have had to undergo four times the amount of civilities.

My intercourse with these people, moreover, constitutes as much a duty as the society of the Hôtel de C—— a pleasure. The place they are to attain in French society depends mainly upon that conceded to them by their ambassador; and it requires some tact, and, above all, careful reference to the emperor's pleasure, to know who are to be received with open arms, who with composure, who with coldness, who

carelessly excluded, who scornfully!

This portion of my task is the more critical, that I have no precedent to recall to mind in the conduct of Madame von Rehfeld under similar circumstances. At St. Petersburg, even the brother or sister of an ambassador, if neglected by the court, would acquire no importance in society by such relationship; nor did our poor Residenz despatch thither travellers of sufficient note, to make it of much consequence whether she invited them to her soivées, or left them to grovel in the

commercial coteries to which they naturally appertained.

Here, all is on a different footing. At the diplomatic dinners, at court, everywhere, the leading Russians are naturally invited to meet their ambassador; and as it frequently happens that they owe their introductions in Paris to sources wholly disconnected with the imperial crown (such as former obligations of the late king during his residence at Mittau, or civilities bestowed in St. Petersburg upon former ambassadors or travellers of the French nation), the task is often perplexing.

The English embassy—even if the English government were susceptible on such points, instead of utterly indifferent—has a comparatively easy duty. In a few hours, the telegraph conveys news to

England; in two days a courier brings instructions; and the ambassador may regulate his negotiations, and the ambassadress her courtesies, by order of the cabinet at home, without keeping a protocol or an invitation in suspense.

Our position is more difficult. The representative of Russia must be a man qualified to act on his own authority; a man of understanding, rather than the mere showy lay-figure with a clever secretary, which,

nine times in ten, constitutes the matériel of an ambassador.

It is as regards my enlightenment on such points that your mother's correspondence is invaluable to me. Before I quitted Russia copious letters of instruction were vouchsafed us; and the personal confidence existing between the emperor and Prince Gallitzin seemed to trace the way straight before us. But it sometimes happens that a pebble is as great an obstacle to the progress of machinery as a fragment of granite; and some of the petty personages here, of whom I have to form my own judgment, and act upon it, puzzle me exceedingly. It would be pleasant enough to be able to like or dislike these country-people of my husband, according to the dictates of my feelings; but this is impossible.

By the way, on a knotty point of this description, you, dear Marguerite, can render me a service. Pray, obtain from Lord Elvinston some renseignements concerning an English family, against which I run my head at every turn, my head profiting little by the collision; for they are as unenlightened as they are fashionable and showy; a Lady Fauconberg and her two daughters—the one married, the other  $\hat{a}$ marier. They have resided, at various times, in various parts of the continent; and, thanks to her fortune, figure, and diamonds, Lady F. appears to have acquired a certain station in society; nor, till she opens her mouth, would any one suspect the vulgarity of nature with which

so much superficial elegance is connected.

At first sight, I conceived a prejudice against these women. The bold and barefaced measure of their flattery - one of the coarsest arts of pushing people—determined me to keep them out of my intimate circle. But let no one form resolutions concerning Lady Faucenberg without making her a party in the project! Familiar with me she was determined to become; and in spite of my interdictory looks and orders, I find her established at the embassy on the easiest footing. By talking of her bosom-friendship with our predecessors, and treating me as a sweet young creature in need of motherly protection, she frustrates all my coldness. Every day I resolve that she shall never find her way here again: yet every day this coolest of cool women glides through the keyhole, and is beforehand with my refusal to see her.

As regards herself, I should have no scruple in crushing her audacity by the rudest means; for the elegance of her dress and tournure pleads with me far less than it might with my imperial mistress. But the husband of the married daughter is an English peer, a Lord Montagu; and the prince is anxious to learn from Lord Elvinston, whether he be a man of any parliamentary influence? He is only just arrived here with his wife on a visit to Lady Fauconberg, so that, at present, his opinions and qualifications are problematical. But should his lady resemble her unmarried sister—a spinster of a certain age, with all the freedom of manner of a married woman - she will prove as little acceptable to me as her lady mother.

Miss Fauconberg, however, thanks to some talent, great beauty, and greater boldness, has acquired a sort of influence in society here, such as is usually attained by people who say everything that comes into their head — if the head be a good one; an influence accompanied by an unenviable and dangerous notoriety. Herself devoid of feeling, she is

careless of wounding those of others.

Her beauty and talent for repartee have recommended her to the notice of many of the leading men here, glad to be amused, in society not always amusing, on such easy terms; and between the dinners of the mother and wit of the daughter their house is well frequented. Still, disliking them as I do, I should throw down the gauntlet but for

our uncertainties respecting Lord and Lady Montagu.

The two Vaudreuils were the means of our acquaintance with these people. Count Alfred declares the Casa Fauconberg to be as indispensable a portion of his existence as the Café Tortoni, or Jeu de Paume; and protests that it is impossible to get through the summer in Paris without melon-ice, tennis, and the impertinences of "la petite Fauconberg" to give a fillip to his languor. But I have candidly told him that, unless he hold his very wild beasts in a chain, they shall have no place in my menagerie. Miss Fauconberg is the only person I ever saw, whom the most repulsive coldness of high-breeding had no influence

in reducing to order.

To give you a specimen of her style of flippancy! The other night, at a little soirée at Madame Appony's, at Bellevue, one of those pleasant little parties which have all the simplicity of Germany and all the sociability of Paris, I happened to be seated on an ottoman, near the open windows, with the Duchesse de C., the Neapolitan ambassadress, and two or three other intimates; when the English miss (leaning across the opposite cushions of the ottoman on which she was reclining, in what English misses call "a decided flirtation" with one of the Austrian attachés, who has been enjoying "decided flirtations" with English misses for the last fifteen years) suddenly exclaimed to me :- "A propos, chère princesse" (though à propos to WHAT I could not conjecture!), "as we were driving through your porte-cochère the other day, I was startled by the sight of an old friend of mine-an odd, clever creature of a governess, who brought up Marie de Choisy, and was l'amie de la maison of the Hôtel de Choisy rather than the governess. We all used to doat upon her; for she helped us to get up our tableaux and charades, and was ready to do anything for anybody. Never was there a creature so willing to have pens wiped upon her, or practical jokes tried upon her (as desperate remedies are tried on criminals) than poor Thérèse Moreau! Can you tell me what has become of her?"

"She is attached to my establishment," replied I, so coldly as, I hoped,

to silence her.

Attached to your establishment?" cried Miss Fauconberg, laughing heartily, and presuming to play upon my words. "I fancied it was only Monsieur le Prince who had attachés in his service?"

Her own attaché applauded this sally, and, to my surprise, several of the standers by laughed outright. But it is the custom to laugh at the

soi-disant bon-mots of Miss Fauconberg.

"Do tell me, in what capacity is she attached to your establishment?" persisted she, following up her attack. "You cannot, surely, want a governess?"

"I did require one when, many years ago, Mademoiselle Moreau entered my father's service," said I, with some degree of hauteur.

"Your father's service? Mais, mon dieu! you are not, surely, the

daughter of the noble baron to whose Saxon château poor old Thérèse banished herself on quitting the Hôtel de Choisy? You, dear princess Gallitzin, cannot be the Demoiselle von Rehfeld of whom she wrote us

such impayable accounts on first reaching Germany?"

Already wounded on more than one occasion by Miss Fauconberg's guerilla modes of warfare, I judged it better not to provoke by retaliation a renewed attack; and disappointed her by quietly replying in the affirmative, and passing unnoticed her rude exclamations of amazement:

On finding, however, that she had failed in what I verily believe to be a preconceived scheme of malice, she added :—" You must kindly allow me, princess, to come sometimes and visit poor, dear, old Moreau! She is such an excellent creature; and her histories of Germany will be so

"Mademoiselle Moreau is her own mistress, and sees what society she

thinks proper," was my cool reply.

"Her own mistress? Why, you said just now, chère princesse, that she was attached to your establishment. Even had you not afforded us that little index to her functions, we all know the Russian meaning of the word independence. You probably mean that she is as much her own mistress at the embassy as Prince Gallitzin his own master at Tzarsko-celo."

Apparently, the ladies present felt that the privileged impertmente was exceeding her prerogative; for they interrupted the conversation by observations almost as completely à propos de bottes as Miss Fauconberg's original allusion; and took care that it should not be resumed.

In the course of the evening, I saw the venerable attaché who had been spectator of the scene, laughing heartily in a corner with Alfred de Vaudreuil; and am pretty certain, from your cousin's mode of shrugging his shoulders, and affecting to find a smile irrepressible, that they were diverting themselves at the audacity of their handsome protégée, Geralda Fauconberg.

But all this cannot amuse you, dear Marguerite; and lest this letter should exceed all bounds of postage, accept my sincere compliments of affection for yourself and Lord Elvinston; from whom, do not fail to procure me the information I have requested.

## Letter XXXV.-From Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau in Paris, to Viscountess Elvinston, Elvinston Castle.

It is a long time, dear lady, since I wrote last, but do not suppose me the less grateful for your kind and persevering attentions. My occupations here are so various and unrelaxing, that I have seldom time for

anything so agreeable as correspondence with those I love.

Alas! dear Marguerite—dear Lady Elvinston, I should say—I sometimes, even now, detect myself indulging in lamentations that Peter should have been out of the way when wanted to carry down Baroness von Rehfeld's chess-box and work-box—the origin of my sad accident and Monsieur de Vaudreuil's taking my place in the carriage to St. Petersburg; which, somehow or other, I cannot help regarding as productive of all the events which have since occurred in the family; the marriage of Ida with a man whose time of life naturally exercises a powerful influence over her character, and of your own banishment to

Scotland! I cannot help again lamenting it, I say; for with all the brilliancy of our position here, the restraint, the responsibility, the fatigue, are in many respects irksome; while as to yourself, though your angelic resignation of character prompts you to declare yourself the happiest of women, I can appreciate what it must be to you, who have enjoyed the advantage of a Parisian education, to be exiled to the desolate north—the ultima Thule—among a horde of semi-savages,

whose habits must appear so baroque and so perplexing!

You tell me, dear viscountess, that since you arrived in England, you have more than once enjoyed the happiness of being mistaken for an Englishwoman. Princess Gallitzin was indignant, when I read her that portion of your letter; for certain it is, that the manners of English ladies here, exhibit little to render the mistake flattering. I can equally understand, however, that the Russianality of your earlier education may have endowed you with facilities of diction, which justify the inhabitants of the land you have adopted in choosing to adopt you in their turn. It is very amiable of you, my dear young friend, to express yourself so grateful to the baroness for having imposed upon you, in infancy, the language which now enables you to commune, heart in heart, with the husband to whom your own heart seems so absolutely submitted.

Princess Gallitzin has no such service to be thankful for as regards the barbarous Russian tongue; nor is it necessary. In the first place, because the prince is not a man with whom to indulge in gossip or even unreserved conversation; in the next, because French is, after all, the exclusive language of the heart for the well born and well bred. Whatever may be their native dialect, all high-souled individuals of good education, break naturally into French for the exposition of their thoughts, whenever their hearts or minds are excited by strong emotions or noble ambitions. For instance, half the billet-doux and half the

state papers of Europe, are written in French.

I have now a great deal of writing on my hands, my dear Marguerite, though not exactly in either of these styles. I have to receive and answer all the letters of invitation and business addressed to the princess; her correspondence with her illustrious colleagues, her mantua-makers, and other purveyors. One moment, a royal billet demands my attention—the next, a perfumer's bill. I exercise, in short, all the functions of a private secretary, though with somewhat less

dignity of office.

I should embrace my vocation, dignified or undignified, with ardour, did it afford me the occasions you may probably suppose for intimate communication with the princess. But since her arrival here, she has become an altered being. I rarely see her, never but when occasions of business render it necessary. Do not imagine that I blame her for this. She is so surrounded—so beset—there are so many pretendants to her favour, and through her to that of the prince—so many who seek her for her society's sake, and so many more, because the new Russian ambassadress is universally the fashion, that I can quite understand her seldom finding a moment's leisure to bestow on an humble friend like poor Thérèse Moreau.

The life of an ambassador's wife, Marguerite, is no such gratuitous affair. Her object must be to entertain every one rather than herself: nor can she follow her personal inclinations in so mere a trifle as filling her dinner-table or her opera-box. Every movement must be calculated—every favour so bestowed as to insure bringing good interest,

She must conciliate enemies into friends, and yet be careful not to do it so openly as to convert her friends into enemies; preserving a nice and judicious balance of favour between the nation she represents and

the nation to which she represents it.

But if this be the case with all ambassadors' wives, how much more so with the wife of an ambassador of Russia! responsible to an absolute monarch—responsible with his life and property, or rather his property and life; for it is easier to confiscate an estate than decapitate a head—the estate being always under the imperial sceptre, and the head not always on the imperial block.

For instance, the czar, for reasons of state, is known to be strongly predisposed against his absentee subjects; justly enough, for those who draw their revenues from a soil should expend at least a portion on its

He entertains (more particularly) a prejudice against those who entertain an especial partiality for Paris, of which he dreads the principles, and despises the pleasures; and nothing more difficult than the task of his representative here-who must either displease the czar by showing favour to persons he disapproves, or expose Russians of high degree to the unfavourable interpretation of the French.

It is among these burning ploughshares that Princess Gallitzin has In the best society here she meets a variety of to steer her way. agreeable Russians from whom she must withhold her civilities; though all with whom she associates delight in their company, and she has no adduceable reason for her apparently capricious coldness.

Though her excellency has never spoken to me on the subject (for from my ostensibly confidential position about her person the prince has, I suspect, expressly cautioned her against too free a communication with a person having extensive social connections in Paris), I am persuaded that one of her chief annoyances arises from the rash freedom of speech with which your wild cousins, the Counts de Vaudreuil rally her upon these sacred subjects. Count Alfred, more especially; who, from his former intimacy with her at Rehfeld and St. Petersburg, assumes a privilege of persiflage which, if exercised by any other person, would naturally cause her doors to be closed against him. For whenever Princess Gallitzin ventures to remonstrate against the indecorum of inquiring whether any momentary cloud on the brow of the prince proceeds from his having received a knouting from the emperor in his morning's despatches, or when Ida receives with reserve the visit of some Russian lady, he demands whether the victim has been marked with the black cross of imperial reprobation; and defends himself by claiming the freedom of relationship.

At Schloss Rehfeld, in presence of your mother, I certainly never heard him call cousins with any member of the Rehfeld family; and the baron, in particular, used to be the object of his scarcely concealed contempt. Except your brother, I never saw any person more scornfully rebut the connection than Count Alfred.

All this is doubtless painful and embarrassing to the princess; for she cannot but perceive the air of displeasure of the prince, whenever similar audacities transpire in his presence. I suspect he has privately counselled Ida to keep these two bold, though most agreeable soi-disant kinsmen, at a more respectful distance. But how is this to be done, with a man so thoroughly undauntable as Count Alfred? The princess, with all her graceful self-possession, is still so young, so very young for the distinguished position she occupies, that the air of assumption she must assume to check the familiarity of a man de bonne compagnie admitted to her house on the footing of a relation,

would sit discordantly upon her soft and feminine beauty.

It would, therefore, be an act of charity, dear Lady Elvinston, were you to warn Count Alfred of the unpleasant predicament in which he places her excellency. But I forget! The customs of your new country do not perhaps authorize a correspondence between cousins of the same age and different sexes? At all events, you might give a hint to the purpose in your next letter to the Baroness von Rehfeld; or even to your brother, from whom, I find, Count Alfred hears constantly. At all events, oblige me by making no remark on the subject in your communications with Ida.

We are shortly to occupy a charming villa on the côte above St. Cloud, a spot I have often heard you mention with admiration. I rejoice at the idea of being in the country again; that is, what we Parisians call in the country, among green trees, within view of the dome of the Invalides! On my arrival there, I hope to prove a better correspondent; for there, at least, I shall be secure from the intrusion of twenty milliners a day, all wild to secure the custom of the belle Princess Gallitzin, who has only to wear a bonnet or coiffure to render it furiously the fashion. You have no idea, you, so indifferent to matters of the toilet, what exquisite taste she has displayed since the accession of independence, and opportunity to favour its exercise. Madame has been heard to call her the best dressed and most distinguished-looking young woman in Paris, and this, let me tell you, is no slight praise from Madame! I could, however, wish that the bijoutiers, modistes, and lingères would allow me an easier time of it. You will scarcely believe me, when I find leisure to trouble you with so long a letter! But then it is for you!

Mille compliments respectueux to your amiable lord.

## Letter XXXVI.—From Princess Gallitzin to the Baroness von Rehfeld.

I ENCLOSE you, dear madam, in cipher, a list of names, which I will thank you to return me in the same manner, accompanied by all the intelligence and instructions you are able to procure for us relative to the owners. Most of them are Russians newly arrived in Paris, the emperor's pleasure respecting whom has not yet been signified. This uncertainty involves a difficult portion of our duty here; for such casual travellers, mostly on their road from a London season to the German baths, sparkle only a day in Paris; and are come and gone, before I have the means of ascertaining their claims to distinction. It would be as well, since nothing appears surer than that those who from so great a distance visit London, will also visit Paris, were you to give me certain indications concerning all who receive passports for a journey to England; to which country, so long as fox-hunting and the turf are the rage, Russia and Austria will always contribute their quota of visitors.

You will have heard with satisfaction how honourable a position has

been conceded to us in the royal circle at St. Cloud; so honourable, indeed, that I have persuaded the prince to pay a forfeiture for the villa he had hired, and engage another within no great distance from the Château. It is difficult to define in what the favour shown us consists. The precedence of an ambassador is too definite to be susceptible of advancement. Even the number of invitations issued to the corps diplomatique has here a specific limit. But every sovereign, more especially so courtly-bred a king as Charles X., has it in his power, by scarcely citable tokens, to mark his good will; by inviting, for instance, the chosen friends of our society, on the same occasions as ourselves; by naming the prince for his whist-table, and by engaging him constantly in conversation, as well for the party which is to celebrate the owerture de chasse at Rambouillet. Our little visit to the

Duchesse de Berri at Rosny is to take place next week.

Though active for his years, and apparently taking pleasure in the excitement of whist and hunting parties, the physical infirmities of the king are sufficiently manifest, to leave the moral ones of his successor a subject of deep anxiety. You can imagine nothing more ungainly than the manners of the dauphin, or more pitiable than his understanding. Rarely does he open his lips without offending some person whom it is desirable to conciliate; or, at all events, the rules of good breeding. Well were it for this country if the Duc de Berri had survived; or if the king were likely to survive till the completion of the education of the young Duc de Bordeaux; if, indeed, France be wise, or prudent enough to take example by Russia, and alter the line of royal succession for the security of the throne. And surely, though the Bourbons were said to return from their sad exile having learned nothing and forgotten nothing during their misfortunes, the people of France have been taught by a more recently but more profoundly enlightened country, that the cause of monarchy cannot be better served in Europe than by excluding a *cretin* from the succession to the crown.

I cannot behold the feeble old monarch of this country, completely subjected to his priests and surrounded by a tribe of bigots who render the name of religion a by-word by their harassing and contemptible exactions, without fresh admiration of the enlightened and active government to which the prince is so fortunate as to have his services devoted. If ever the qualities and qualifications indispensable to the sovereign of a great empire were united in a human form, it is in the person of the firm, active, intrepid, and intelligent prince, whose knowledge is as deep and universal as his powers of mind are acute; who, by the moderation and frugality of his habits and splendour of his munificence, the purity of his private and graces of his public life, has so completely accredited the wisdom of the brother by whom he

was summoned to the throne.

There is indeed a pride in finding oneself even the most insignificant of instruments in the hands of such a sovereign; and believe me, dear madam, the greatness of Russia, and the imposing attitude she assumes just now among the nations of Europe, so dignifies me in my own estimation as the wife of her representative, that I sometimes feel myself in danger of unbecoming pride, among those envoys of the lesser states of Italy and Germany, who affect airs of diplomatic mystery and consequence; while their chanceries and bureaux remind one of Polichinelle mounting guard over a despatch box!

I cannot describe what heartfelt delight it would afford me, to know that my deportment here was the subject of approval in the august

quarter where alone it is my ambition to please; and I entreat you to believe that no duty could be imposed upon me, however distasteful, however laborious, in which I should not delight to mark my gratitude and devotion to the imperial family. It is the humbleness of my attachment to them which renders me so proud in my estimation of myself, and perhaps so haughty in the estimation of others.

Among the influential families in Paris by whom these sentiments (or perhaps you will call it, this infatuation of mine) are fully shared, let me cite the Marquis and Marchioness de Rouilly, whose high position in the world probably renders their names familiar to you; though, having occupied a post in the administration under Bonaparte, the marquis is little favoured by the existing government. As the personal friend, moreover, of the Duke of Orleans, he seldom appears at court without provoking from the dauphin some uncourteous observation.

The Hôtel de Rouilly, meanwhile, assembles all that is distinguished of French society, whether as regards rank, fortune, wit, science, or political influence. The marquis has resided much in foreign countries, even, I believe, in Russia; and perfects the recherche of his princely establishment by the adoption of all that is most refined in the habits of European refinement. He told me last night, with a smile, that he admitted the influence of his own countrymen only in his cuisine; that his office is regulated by Italians—his stables by Englishmen—his library by Germans—his cabinet by Russians. It would have gratified you beyond measure to hear his tribute of admiration to the enlightened policy of the czar.

It was from Princess W—, by the way, that I received the letter of introduction earnestly pressing the marquis and marchioness upon my civilities.

Another person who has brought me letters from the princess, is a very rich Russian, named Madame Dombreski; a widow, I conclude—or at least there is no reference to a husband in Princess W——'s long eulogium of her wit and beauty. I have called upon her in consequence, and was struck by the magnificence of her establishment; but we have not yet met. Should this presentation of the princess procure me as agreeable an addition to my acquaintance as the Rouillys, I have reason

I have executed your commission by sending you from Herbault two paille de riz hats, with flewrs de saison, and two more with feathers, for full dress, for your visit to Peterhoff. The manteau de cour I despatched last week from Victorine, will, I hope, satisfy your expectations. The trimmings of scarlet hibiscus cannot fail to attract the empress's attention, for they are the first ever made here; and I took care to send you a detached second set, in order that, should the empress approve of them as I expect, you may present them and lay aside your own. I have also sent a variety of the last nœuds and chiffons from Mademoiselle Aminthe, and a canezou which Minette has just invented for Madame. Among these trifles, there cannot fail to be some that will prove a novelty to the empress.

I entreat you, dear madam, hasten as much as possible your answer, that it may reach me previous to the departure of the prince for Rambouillet; for you will also find in cipher certain questions which it is indispensable to me to have satisfied without delay. Offer the expression of my affectionate duty to my father. The prince writes to him by this courier. I say nothing of Lady Elvinston, aware that you maintain an uninterrupted correspondence.

Letter XXXVII.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil in Paris, to the Countess Auguste in Burgundy.

How good you are, chère tante, to establish yourself this summer as the representative of the family at Les Genêts. But for you, the shutters of the gloomy salon would never be opened to admit the light of day and disturb the labours of the moths in the old tapestry; but for you, the flowers of our celebrated rosary would be exclusively dedicated to the decoration of the reposoirs of the Fête Dieu, and the chapel on the fete of St. John. But for you, the swallows would never be disturbed in the arcades—the rooks in the chimneys, and poor old Antoine might trim his *charmilles* and cultivate his *espaliers* in vain. Once more, my grateful thanks to you, dear madam, for condescending to inhabit, during the summer, a rat-hole which is only supportable to my brother and myself in the depth of winter, when his boar-hounds are in good throat, and the wolves stirring in the forest.

At present, I trust, you have more docile companions; and that Moumouth, that least spiteful of spiteful cats and most snowy-skinned of beauties, has not in her chasse aux grives left traces of her Angora

fleece on the briars of the rosary.

You are right, however, in surmising that your absence at this particular moment has proved a serious disadvantage to the fair lady you are pleased to call grand-daughter; but who so mistakes herself and others, that I much doubt whether she would be disposed to concede to you the less flattering title of grandmother. Forgive her!—It is not to be expected that the daughter of a German hobereau should comprehend the honour of being acknowledged as even a collateral connection by a scion of the House of Clermont Tonnerre, engrafted on that of Vaudreuil.

As little, perhaps, had you spent the summer in Paris, would her self-sufficiency have deigned to profit by your knowledge of the world;

and above all of our world, which is not that of all the world.

Princess Gallitzin is a gifted creature, beautiful, accomplished, quickwitted; who would rank high in society, if she did not pretend to be supreme. But a bold climber who misses the top round of the ladder, runs a chance of being precipitated to the ground. Prudent people

advance no higher than they are sure of their footing.

None know better than yourself how fiercely our society rebuts intrusion and crushes assumption. Towards the princess, thanks in some measure to my premonitory flourish of trumpets, and in some to her rank and attractions-it was disposed to be more indulgent. bourg opened wide its gates to her. Yet such is the perversity of human nature, that she disdained to be welcomed as an ally; and chose to take it by assault, in order to make a triumphal entry. The pretension was so absurd, that no one was angry. Every one laughed; and a burst of laughter is of all incidents the most fatal to such as affect dignity in ascending a throne.

Alas! dear countess, and best of aunts, why is it that we children of the dust have all such a tendency to enthronization? Why has every petty coterie its sovereigns? Why is the tabouret of the duchess at

court so ridiculously parodied among the arm-chairs of every private

drawing-room?

Do not infer from all this that our loving country-people have been rudely laughing to scorn the blunders of a stranger. We French are naturally too courtly as well as too indulgent towards youth and beauty, even when disfigured by ill-breeding, to heed her freaks. On the contrary, the Hôtel de C. after sitting in judgment on her proceedings, voted that she was far more piquante as a Talleyrand in petticoats, far newer and more amusing as a Madame de Chevreuse manquée, than if she had assumed her very sufficient honours on the same estrade with the Austrian and English ambassadresses; to both of whom she is inferior in the ex-official dignities of birth, fortune, and age.

It was among the foreign residents here (exalted into importance by their splendid hospitalities in a city the least prodigal in Europe in the good Samaritanism of pouring claret and champagne into the bosom of its neighbour) that the persiflage began. Certain Russians who, till her arrival, had enjoyed high distinctions, irritated by her neglect, which they dared not resent against the accredited representative of that most vindictive of empires (the talons of whose imperial eagle impend over their estates) whispered to others the resentments to which they dared not give free utterance; and a whisper once breathed in this temple of echo has little chance of sinking into silence for seasons to come.

When compelled by the chances of society to exchange a civil word with any of these countrywomen of Prince Gallitzin, she had always la bouche pincée, as if afraid of committing herself; and in place of the à plomb I saw her exhibit under difficult circumstances in St. Petersburg, no sooner was she the wife of a salaried servant of the emperor, than she became feeble, vacillating, inconsistent; her every curtsey so equivocal and prevaricating, that it seemed to be awaiting the arrival of the next

despatches to decide itself into gracious or discourteous.

So lynx-eyed are the espials of self-love, that these hesitations were soon discovered by their susceptible victims; and one of them, adroit enough to understand the policy of throwing the first stone at herself, was heard to exclaim, in the circle of the Petit Château,-"I wonder when poor Madame Gallitzin will receive her instructions from St. Petersburg whether she is to take my hand or only bow!" Ida, it seems, had been incautious enough to subside from the greater to the less mark of distinction; and there were standers-by ill-natured enough to elevate their eyebrows at the change.

A bad example is sooner followed than a good one. On the instigation of this slight attack, more than one méchante langue of the Faubourg busied itself with her proceedings. The story improved in the telling. It was soon reported that Princess B- had accosted her ambassadress with, "Dites donc, ma chère, m'envoyez-vous promenerou nous promenons-nous ensemble?-Vous devez sûrement avoir recu

votre leçon de St. Pétersbourg?"

The worst of her foes consist in the coterie Fauconberg, which you. dear aunt, so justly despise, but which is not the less one of the most amusing adder's nests now engaged in hatching the spitefulnesses of The little Fauconberg (she has been called la petite Fauconberg these fifteen years, and has, therefore, clearly established her claim to the title!) has taken it into her very handsome head to be jealous of Ida, or to make Ida jealous of her; and being the affidée, by dint of waltzing and scandal, of all the attachés in Paris, has contrived to draw forth and string together just so many particulars of the princess's birth, parentage, and education, as form an unsatisfactory appendix to

her pretensions to the diplomatic throne.

I need not remind you, dear countess, of our excellent abbé's air of horror on learning that the first wife of your son-in-law was the daughter of an ecclesiastic, but for his tonsure, his venerable hairs would have stood on end! Imagine, therefore, the sympathetic emotion produced among the dévotes of St. Thomas d'Aquin, on learning that Princess Gallitzin was clerically descended. It is in vain to preach to these dear dowagers the connubial licence of the reformed and patriarchal churches. They insist upon being shocked on such occasions. They choose to believe the Roman Catholic church, according to its name, universal; and, consequently, regard Princess Gallitzin as by inheritance a sort of Lucretia Borgia. "Her mother was the daughter of a priest!"—conveys her sentence of excommunication from their set!

The princess, even when she had leisure to notice the ruff-and-farthingale formality with which her advances were received in this quarter, assigned all the unimportance to the change, which persons born out of the pale of the great world are apt to connect with the prejudices of the old. But with us, chère tante, the owl of wisdom, like the phenix of fable, reproduces in the young bird the exact plumage of the old; and our charming élégantes (Madame Ernest de R—— and Madame Juste de B—— in particular), soon began to raise their fine eyes and lily-white hands to heaven in emulation of their grandmothers.

"Oui—je le vois,—c'est indispensable,—on ne tourne pas le dos à une ambassadrice!" became their apologetic reply to all who inquired whether they were acquainted with the new Russian ambassadress. But "I see her," is a very different phrase from "I am enchanted to see her!"—and those who came prepared to burst into acclamations of "charmante!" "ravissante!" when describing the dress and manners of Princess Gallitzin at Madame Appony's breakfast, now discreetly lowered their tone into "elle n'est vraiment pas mal!" which, unless I am much mistaken, will progress before the close of the ensuing carnival into "elle n'est pas trop mal pour une," some will add "Russe!" some, "a parson's grand-daughter." If she had not managed to affront Princess B—— and the Fauconbergs, she would have remained "cette charmante princesse."

Not that I at all approve or sanction the folly of the little Fauconberg, who chooses to give herself the air of resenting my favourable announcement previous to the arrival here of the Gallitzin. I naturally made it an act of duty towards yourself, dear aunt, to speak well of any person, even collaterally connected with your family; and the Lily of Rehfeld has claims upon my good offices as my cousin's step-daughter. I should otherwise have left her without the sponsorship of my good word to make her own way with the severe tribunal she is rendering

severer.

I should even make it a point of conscience to punish the Fauconberg coterie, and more especially la bellissima Geralda, by absenting myself from the house. But it would ruin me in Macouba, or I should have to hazard steeple-chasing out of season to procure myself a little excitement, were I to dispense with the viper-broth which forms the pain quotidien of that amusing society. After a winter at St. Peters-

burg, I cannot possibly refuse to reward my own virtue and bodily

sufferings by some slight consideration for my ghostly comfort.

Had you been here, dear countess, to return to my original proposition, these contretemps had, perhaps, been spared. I have had no auxiliary whose aid I could call in as chamber counsel to the haughty beauty. St. Petersburg is too remote for the baroness's remonstrances not to arrive a month too late; and to engage her good offices would be like sending for the pompiers from Bordeaux to extinguish a fire in Paris. The old governess, of whom I once complained to you as a family nuisance, and who is established in her pupil's household, as a sort of demoiselle de compagnie, or sécrétaire intime, or what you think proper that is most private and confidential, occurred a moment to my mind as a channel of exhortation. But the Fauconberg set, who knew her well at the Hôtel de Choisy, assure me Mademoiselle Thérèse has about as much influence over the conduct of her élève as the brooding hen of the Jardin des Plantes over the eagles and cassowaries, whose incubation occurred, "by authority," under her wings.

Lord Montagu, whose province it is in the Fauconberg family to embroider upon the designs of Geralda, declares that the ex-gouvernante is required to stand, while the ambassador's wife dictates her correspondence; and that she delivers the menu of the maître d'hotel every morning on her knees. But you have some experience in the mauvaises

plaisanteries of Montagu.

Her aid, at all events, was unavailable. I have, therefore, left the poor dear princess to her fate. No education so perfect as that of the self-educated; and by the time her excellency has been ten years an ambassadress, she will have learned that nothing is more hollow than the grandeur of such a throne—nothing more servile than the service of all the Russias. What matters it, after all, whether the collar of the serf be of iron or gold? or the knout a leathern thong or the flaggellation of an imperial reprimand?

Marguerite's is the position, chère tante—Marguerite's the independence! I learn from the Montagus, who have recently arrived from England, that the whole Elvinston family are enchanted with her; and that the Duke and Duchess of Rockingham were hurrying off to the north, to spend the grouse season with their brother and

sister.

According to their report, about the time the patriarch is next bestowing his benediction on the sturgeon and sterliad, you are likely to be called upon for yours, in favour of a great-grandson! Heaven send you a little Thane! I am delighted at the very idea of a kilted cousin. Of all the outlandish channels into which the blood of Vaudreuil has diverged, that which brings us into kinsmanship with Macbeth appears the most bewildering. Je recommande à tous les saints, les destinées de la race Russo-Gallo-Ecossaise: et vous baise très-humblement les mains.

#### Letter XXXVIII.—From Princess Prascovia Gallitzin to Princess Gallitzin in Paris.

DEAR SISTER AND PRINCESS.—I have to thank you for the two charming letters which have reached me in the course of the last six months; the first announcing your safe arrival in Paris; the second, your arrival at the conclusion that it is the most charming city in the world. I have allowed a long interval to elapse previous to the expression of my hopes that the lapse of another half-year may dispose

you to confirm your verdict.

My brother, you assure me, has been received with higher honours than were ever before conceded to a Russian ambassador; yourself, welcomed with greater favour than is usually shown in Paris to a woman of ex-Parisian extraction. I live very much out of the world; partly because the world despises me as crooked, mean, and old—partly because I despise it for the self-same reasons. Nevertheless, even into my Diogenes tub, there penetrate sufficient rumours of the vulgar stir without, to have inspired me with a notion that the place of every ambassador of every great nation, is as accurately marked at court as the places of the stars in their spheres, or the pieces on a chess-board; and that the more or less of favour, any increase or decrease of which might produce an international war, is never subjected to the sliding scale of regal caprice.

Still more am I surprised to find you assert that the Parisians are nationally prejudiced. I have always heard that the thing they liked best, after newspapers and  $caf\acute{e}$  noir, was a foreigner. I recollect hearing that they named streets after les Osages, and went mad for the giraffe. You, who are on the spot, ought to know best. Experience is,

according to an impertinent proverb, a very universal teacher.

Forgive me, therefore, dear princess and sister, if, in the greatness of my surprise at finding there are new things under the sun. I have left your letters so long unanswered. I waited to write till I had something to say—a consideration which, luckily for the revenues of the

post-office, forms a rare obstacle to female correspondence.

By something to say, I do not mean something agreeable. I should be sorry to do so banal a thing as send caviar to Riga; and since you are, by the grace of God, young and pretty, and by the grace of Nicholas I., an Ambassador's Wife, I cannot doubt that nine out of every ten letters you open contain empty compliments. For my part, I hold nothing to be a compliment worth postage, that has not at least half a grain of corn in the chaff.

To adopt the language of the country of which you appear to be so readily adopting the sentiments, understand that my something, dear princess and sister, will be a pillule de santé, not a bonbon. Excuse my plain speaking; but it is my worst fortune, that in all things nature

has made me plain.

You may remember being assured by Princess W—— and a variety of other persons in St. Petersburg (I never heard that they had so instructed you, but form my deductions from their characters and dispositions), that my object in recommending Marguerite Erloff as a

wife to my brother, was to secure for Sergius a wife whose family

interest with the emperor was equal to our own.

Being pretty well aware that the name of Erloff is about as acceptable to the czar as that of Trubetskoï or Czartoriski, the motive of my recommendation was of a wholly different nature. Marguerite was the daughter of my brother's noblest friend, and the daughter of a termagant. I had, therefore, as little doubt that she had honourable blood in her veins, as that she had suffered persecution and learned mercv.

Banished in my own person from even the frontiers of the matrimonial estate, I have had no occasion to create a liberal standard for the rights of a double woman; and consequently adhere to the patriarchal opinion that a man's wife is his hand-maid; and that to do honour to her vocation, she must do implicitly as she is bid. "Wives, obey your runsbands—subjects obey your czar!" constitute my two precepts for the good government of the world;—for the world reading

Russia;—to me there is no world elsewhere.

I was consequently surprised to find myself accused by the hundred tongues of rumour, ninety-nine of which are lying ones, of having promoted his sudden preference for a daughter of the German envoy to whom the widow of General Erloff had re-united herself; a young lady richer in beauty, in accomplishments, in learning, than the gentle Marguerite, and twenty times more richly endowed in point of fortune

I had about as much to do with the marriage as the bronze statue of the Emperor Alexander, or its pedestal of rock. It was no affair of mine. Sergius, with half a century's experience, was his own master. I had only to submit; and after resigning oneself to be ugly and to

grow old, one learns to be patient under any visitation.

Generous souls, however, revolt against the sense of obligation; and I could not, in an instant, forget how deeply I was indebted to Mademoiselle von Rehfeld for some of the most painful moments of my life; when visiting the Hotel of the Legation for the purpose of accustoming her whom I was eager to call sister, to the sight of my infirmities, I found myself an object of indecent mockery to the daughter of the house; as well as to the young French fop, who was

amusing her at my expense, and himself at hers.

It was not the province of a crooked younger sister, grateful to him for never having enforced her retirement into a convent, to harass my brother with unavailing remonstrances on his inconsistency. Moreover, as, on the very day he announced his marriage to me, I had the satisfaction of seeing the Izaak's bridge opposite my windows, which had been constructed in the morning, pulled to pieces again at night on the refreezing of the river, with the prospect of reconstruction on the morrow, there seemed every probability that the equally variable temperature of human will might equally insure the rupture of the marriage.

In this, however, I was mistaken. The emperor interposed with his approval; and from that moment, as in loyalty bound, the barometer established itself at "fair." Thenceforward, my father's daughter had

only to submit to the resolution taken by her father's son.

That I resigned myself with apparent cheerfulness, do my father's daughter the justice to remember! From the moment you were destined to bear the same name with Prascovia Gallitzin, you became

an object of respect to her. I trust I omitted no act of grace calculated to make your entrance into our family as smooth as the descent of an ice-hill. To have rendered my brother's bride uneasy, would have been to render my brother's sister ridiculous-an effort which nature has generously taken off my hands.

I was not sorry, however, that the marriage of Marguerite Erloff with a foreign Crossus was fated to relieve my eyes from a permanent memento of my disappointments, and had all the less difficulty in

assuming a merry countenance on your wedding-day.

I admit that it was the greatest relief to me, dear princess and sister, again to borrow the flattering formula of your address—the very greatest relief to witness the departure of both. I had no wish to find a scoffer under my humble roof. In my early youth, when the arch-scorner of scornful France visited our great Catherine (whom he flattered into littleness), I remember hearing my father assert that "mockery was the wit of hell." Excuse my plain-speaking. As I said before, it has pleased heaven to make me plain.

Accept this apothegm, by the way, as the half-grain of corn I promised you in my chaff. But you, who are a learned lady, and have Plato at your finger's ends, will perhaps care little for such homely

wisdom.

No sooner had you quitted St. Petersburg, than I took my departure for Moscow. It was a pleasant journey. To exchange the work of man's hands for the works of those of his Maker, is always to ascend a degree higher in the scale of enjoyment. But never had I felt it so deliciously as in laying aside, on this occasion, the gauds and glare of courtly finery so unmeet for me, for hodden gray,—and exchanging the feverish atmosphere of half a million of breaths for the breath of nature. I have often watched the lilacs bloom, and listened with an ear all eagerness for the first nightingale. I never enjoyed their united enchantments so exquisitely as this season. It needed all the purity of such pleasures to take out of my mouth the nauseous taste of worldliness I had been imbibing.

At Moscow, the first person presented to me in society was a kinsman of your own. I had recently heard so much of the name of Rehfeld, that, perhaps, some newer one might have been more acceptable. But I could not forbear being gracious, and answering his questions; for his object in seeking my acquaintance was to talk of Marguerite—to deplore her loss—and, above all, to explain to me (what the parties themselves had cautiously concealed), that it was an explanation of Wilhelm von Rehfeld with my brother, which first intimated to Sergius his little

likelihood of ever obtaining an influence over her affections.

He is a very candid, a very frank young man, that cousin of yours; and it is well he has some recommendable quality, for of all those which render a man most insupportable, commend me to the enthusiasm of a feeble mind—the exaggeration of a servile character—the exultation of a low soul, which his manner betrayed. But his ingenuousness atoned for all. I was desirous of becoming better acquainted with my dear princess and sister; and he fully introduced her to my knowledge. painted her as a lovely child—a beautiful girl. He painted her as the charge of the fond Sara—the anxious pastor—the zealous Thérèse; as loved by her father and adored by her father's people. He painted her like a fair tree planted by the river side, on which the sun loved to shine, and the dews of heaven to fall. I appeal to yourself, fair sister, for a supplemental account of the blossoms expanding, and the fruits of gratitude, godliness, purity, and worth, brought forth in due season by this tree of blessedness, to do honour to its native soil! all this I know not why I weary you; for the sentiments of a dwarfish sister-in-law are as little worth writing as reading. But I wish to account to you for the surpassing interest with which your welfare has

inspired me.

I have many important correspondents in St. Petersburg, of whom it is my first object to inquire to what degree the fine flourishes I have been making among the various branches of our ancient house concerning the happiness and prosperity of my brother, are mere arabesque. I repeat only, indeed, a fifth part of what you write me of his success, and good renown at the court of France; yet I find that I have still said five times too much. Grant your gracious attention to what has been flung in my teeth in return.

Learn that Madame la Baronne von Rehfeld has fallen still lower in the estimation of the Emperor of Russia, than Madame la Comtesse Erloff; and the Grand Duchess Helena is said to have whispered to Princess W-, "Who is to rely upon uncommon fame? trust to appearances? The clearest eye, the shrewdest ear-even those of the emperor-may be deceived! That lovely wife of Sergius Gallitzin is a mere implement in the hands of her mother-in-law. Nothing can

be more vexatious than our news from Paris."

I leave you, dear sister and princess, to make your profit of this infor-Perhaps you may possess a key to the hieroglyphics. For my part, who am not of the court, I am a poor interpreter. To me a crocodile is always a crocodile, and a triangle, a triangle. You can probably decipher the mystery of mysteries; and I leave you to your studies.

## Letter XXXIX.—From Viscountess Elvinston, Elvinston Castle, to Princess Gallitzin in Paris.

How kind of you, dearest Ida, how very kind, to persist in your visits to my poor sisterhood and obtain their renewed prayers for my health and happiness! Good souls; they must indeed be favourites of heaven, for never did intercessions so prosper. A week's consideration would scarcely enable me to find a gratifiable wish unfulfilled.

For even my desire of seeing you again is not a wish ungratified; since we could not meet without the sacrifice on your part of your gay Paris for this secluded place; or on mine, of this dear spot, for your noisy, gadding, troublesome Paris! I am content, therefore, dearest,

to meet you by letter; every way, every way content.

My cousin Alfred's intelligence was correct, though I can by no means imagine how he obtained it. A few weeks after Christmas, when you are in the gayest of your court fètes of the carnival, entreat once more the prayers of my poor old convent, that I may become a happy It is the only blessing left for heaven to lavish upon my head.

We have been spending the whole autumn at this place, and the most delightful autumn you can imagine. Elvinston's four sisters have been united, for the first time since childhood, under his roof-they, and their husbands, and their children; all loving and encouraging me with  $\hat{N}$  2

their kindness, till I soon ceased to consider myself a stranger. The richest heiress, or proudest lady of their our own land, could not have been more fondly welcomed to their heart than the portionless Mar-

guerite Erloff.

Ida, I know I am weak and undiscerning! I was never praised for proficiency, either by my kinsmen or my preceptors. But tell me how it could possibly be that you, who are so acute of mind, were ever betrayed into the blunder of deciding Lord Elvinston's disposition to be reserved, or his nature severe and solemn? I never saw such a boy—I never saw such a warm-hearted creature! You should see him among his little nephews and nieces; you should see him among his tenants; you should see him in his own home, by his own fire-side, stimulating the enjoyments of others by his never flagging, yet never importunate mirth.

But I shall weary you, Ida, by talking of all this. I remember hearing you say at St. Petersburg, one night on quitting the formal circle of the grand chamberlain, that for worlds you would not be released from the pale of etiquette; and that you found all society unsatisfactory in which every person's place was not marked out by \*Almanach de la\*

Cour!

How you would despise, therefore, our contempt of ceremony! Yet in all respects, excepting such petty observances, Elvinston Castle might pass for a regal household. The old mansion, situated on a fine rock, with magnificent terraces fronting the river, and a drawbridge and ancient gateway in the rear, seems to require only sentries at the gate to be a seat of government. In the olden time, when the ancestors from whom my husband inherits this baronial property, were sometimes regents of the kingdom, always akin to the throne, it really enjoyed such distinctions; and the venerable keep with its bartizans and meurtrières, looks as if it had more than once held its own against disloyal enemies of the crown.

Do you remember, Ida, how I used to delight in the quaint antiquity of Rehfeld, even unconnected as it was with the wider page of history? To me the romance of the past has always possessed an overweenint interest: probably through some of those vague instincts of our nature, which seem existent there expressly to connect it with the destinies pre-

pared for us by the hand of the Almighty.

Judge, therefore, of my present happiness! Judge of my delight in first hailing from afar the old gray turrets of this noble castle, over-looking an intervening valley, all beauty and fertility, like a sovereign surveying the subjects under his stern, yet beneficent guard. For a moment I was overawed. I fancied that, in such a place, life must assume a grander and therefore graver aspect. I prepared myself for

solemnity and all the gloomy ceremony of state.

Yet, trust me, within these fine old walls, the comfortable has even a cosier existence than in your choicest boudoirs of Paris: as though ensconced within flank of towers and turrets, the better to secure its independence of ease. Nay, the fine suites of apartments overlooking the river, which from the elevation of the noble rock on which the castle is founded, require no protection from the circumvallations of art, are the most cheerful and sunny in the world. One seems to look down on nature (and never was her face more fair than in our lovely valley), as from a station midway between earth and heaven, forbidding us to attach ourselves too earnestly to the things of this world; or, through selfish covetousness of pleasures beyond, lose sight of the

mighty measure of enjoyment conceded by Providence to our passing

day.

At first sight the castle appears exclusively adapted to warlike defence—to the habitation of men-at-arms—or, at best, to the dull turretchamber life of tapestry of some chatelaine of the olden time. It was not till I was installed in the delicious apartments commanding the valley, the scene of my husband's happy youth and his mother's favourite retreat, that I became aware of all the cheerfulness and homely privacy which may be united with a life of grandeur.

Poor Thérèse used sometimes to complain of the dulness of Rehfeld; you, invariably. To me it never appeared dull. Surveying the old Schloss through the eyes of my heart, I peopled it with such visions as beset the souls of those who, in early life, are compelled by care without to seek solace within. How much more this place, which I enjoy with the whole force of a heart complete in its affections, as well as with the enthusiasm of a mind still childish enough to conjure

immaterial joy out of things material!

With Elvinston's sisters I often visit, during the deer-stalking expeditions of our husbands, the fine environs of this place, which abound in historical associations. Legends of the Bruce and Wallace connect themselves with its scenery; nay, legends of warriors and wizards who were legendary beings in the time of William Wallace and Robert Bruce. But the spot most fertile to me in interest of various kinds is a suite of rooms in the old keep, inhabited by Mary Stuart the so-faulty, yet so fault-effacing Mary, as a temporary refuge under the guardianship of one of the proudest of her subjects, whom she found a gaoler and left a lover. I could fill a larger space than you would have leisure to do more than cast your eye over unheeding, with the tale of that deep and disastrous passion; one of the innumerable episodes in the life of an unfortunate queen, who seems to stand in history a perpetual example of the incompatibility of youth and beauty with the sober dignities of a throne.

Elvinston and his sisters are almost grateful to me for my enthusiasm; and seem to love me the better for loving their noble home. Why, the veriest stranger passing in the distance salutes it with reverence! The artist wanders hither from the south,—nay, from foreign countries, to make its stern features and smiling landscapes his own;—and many a distant mansion is brightened by the mere portraiture of its stately features. How much rather I,—to whom it is endeared by thoughts of all that is holy in homeship,—all that is loveable in love;—by its connection with those whose wisdom and goodness laid the foundations of the honours to be held in the land by children who will be mine and his;—mine, so unworthy of this favoured existence—his, who came to seek me out at the extremity of the earth, and snatch me from a life of

care to a life of prosperity and peace!

But how I ramble on! How selfish is happiness as more selfish than sorrow, so often upbraided with the fault! Yet mine is not wholly selfish, dearest Ida; for, heaven knows, I would fain have you share my unexampled felicity; though in my troubles I never wished to divide

with you the burthen of my cares!

You talk to me in your letters of my "petticoated Highlanders." You must go further than Elvinston Castle, ignorant sister, and fare worse, to make their acquaintance! We wear the plaid, but we wear the trews. There was a grand gathering of the tenants (will it sound better in your ears if I call them vassals?) the other day, in the grand

old gothic hall of the castle. You can imagine nothing more joyous or

more patriarchal.

Towards evening the pipers were called in; and, for the first time, I beheld a dance, compared with which the grotesque wildness of our mazurk is tame. Elvinston's sisters, and even their brother, (usually so averse to dancing—but what Scotsman, he says, can resist a reel?)—joined in the diversion. At first, some of the old clansmen seemed to take it to heart, that their "bonnie wee leddie," as they qualify my insignificance, did not make a poor attempt at their national pastime. But when they learned why dancing was forbidden me, Ida, they raised such a cheer of joy, as I, who so hate noise, felt to be the most stirring music that ever reached my ear!

One fine old man, with grey hair and reverend aspect, instantly insisted upon shaking hands with me; and there were tears on his cheeks as he did so. It would be the sixth generation, he said, he should have seen of the family. I fancied that Elvinston was as much moved as himself. I am not sure. Hating, as he does, to make a parade of his feelings, it was only because he turned away so abruptly

that I fancied there were tears in his eyes.

Winter is now setting in; and it is the first time I ever saw the leaves fall, or heard the storms arise, except in the shelter of a city. I know not why, but the season appears to me less cheerless in the country. Whatever sunshine comes we are prepared to enjoy; and I have adopted the Russian fashion of converting a corner of our drawing-room into a bower, by bringing in choice trees from the splendid conservatories erected on one of the southern terraces. By careful attention to the renewal of these, summer is still within, though

winter growls without.

I would not quit the castle now for the world. This is the favourite season for country hospitality. Our neighbours expect to be enterained; and Elvinston is a member of an ancient hunt here, which derives its chief popularity from the influence of a few noble patrons. The castle is always full,—that is, almost always; and the private, happy, fireside days, niched in between these festive hospitalities, are the happiest holidays you can imagine. I had not thought there could be such happy days, when still tied down to the monotonous publicity of a court. Yet all the time we were enduring these tedious fêtes in St. Petersburg, Ida, Elvinston Castle was standing where it stands, shone upon by the sun, revered by the people, waiting for people to be happy in it! Thank heaven, it had not to wait long!

That purpose is at least accomplished. The blessing of domestic peace is upon our roof; and beneath it, sounds of music—sounds of comfort—the laugh of young children—the whisper of loving hearts. May God have mercy upon us, and not adjudge such happiness too

great to last!

## Letter XL.—From the Count Alfred de Vaudreuil in Paris, to Count Erloff at Moscow.

I CONGRATULATE you on your philosophy, ungentle coz! I perfectly agree with you, that next to loving a woman to madness, the greatest rapture on earth is hating her to madness, even as the witty English statesman expounded, that next to the enjoyment of winning at hazard,

his greatest pleasure was in losing.

I conclude, from the contents of your last letter, that your furor brevis, under the influence of a passion even briefer and more furious than anger, was far more furious than my own; for so far from taking refuge from my fancy for the Lily of Rehfeld, in detestation of the Ambassador's Wife, I find Princess Gallitzin a very pleasant acquaintance. In common with all the rest, or nearly all the rest of Paris, I think her charming.

For the graces of wit and manner so often met with here, become unquestionably more graceful and wittier in combination with those personal charms in which the Helens of our Paris are so often deficient. Among our ugly beauties, the fair Ida appears almost a

divinity!

One is always afraid when the woman of one's fancy becomes the wife of some other man's heart, lest she should sink into domesticity, and disgust one with her dowdiness. But the princess is grown a thousand times more worldly and coquettish, in the state which is supposed to entail the calamity of domestic happiness. If an angel before, she has put forth an additional pair of wings—wings not too angelic, bien entendu—but such as might grace the ateliers of Madame Xavier, or Monsieur Herbault—of oiseaux de paradis or marabouts.

You have often heard me assert, as one of my few moral principles, dear Leck, the axiom of "soyons de notre pays!"—Paris is my "pays." I was born, and would fain die here; for I am Parisian to the heart's core. Now, your true Parisian is inevitably a worshipper of fashion. Here, la mode is, as it were, the soul of patriotism. Madame la Princesse Gallitzin is furieusement à la mode—I, a furious patriot; ergo—

but I leave the logical conclusion to yourself.

I say again, FURIEUSEMENT à la mode; and what a triumph for a little [provincial like the Lily, whose polishing-mill was St. Petersburg! It cannot last—I am satisfied that it will not last. But this is the very essence of the triumph; for is not "la mode" always

' passagère ?"

When out of fashion, I do not pretend that I shall discover in her society all the attraction I find to-day. I do not pretend to admire a flower when out of bloom, or a fruit when withered; or to adore an idol whose worship is abjured. On the contrary, the block of wood or stone becomes all the more stony and wooden, that one ever mistock it for a divinity. At present, however, the idol is radiant in its shrine—"au jour, le jour!"

Our fêtes of the carnival have begun; and let me tell you that it is no trifling distinction to be so connected by ties of kinsmanship or marriage with a popular ambassadress, as to be considered her privileged cavalier. There is to be a charming ball next week at the Pavillon Marsan; and Princess Gallitzin, whose visit to Rosny and residence at St. Cloud in the autumn have placed her on a more intimate footing with the "illustre famille" than the three other ambassadresses, will be, doubtless, the belle of the night. While Marguerite is enjoying the pains and perils of maternity, Ida will be fluttering in a royal ball-room—each to her vocation. Gallitzin, who has no patrimonial estate, appears little ambitious of the burthen of a family; while as to his wife, I have often heard her cite your sister's passion for children as the most unaccountable preference in the world. Ida was clearly not meant to be a mother. She was made for an ambassador's wife. For

once the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong.

By the way, there is a terrible tug of war here, between a certain clique of English people, among whom, till Ida's arrival, I spent the greater portion of my time, and the Ambassade de Russie. The embassy, as you may suppose, has the best of it; having on its side precedence, youth, beauty, and Alfred de Vaudreuil. But our antagonists make a good fight. They possess in society the powerful advantage of priority. They have been established here for years; giving dinners to their friends and pain to their foes; and, between love and fear, have assembled an important force of auxiliaries. There is a clever man in the family, and a handsome woman; a man who sticks at nothing in the way of plaisanterie or mauvaise plaisanterie; and your wicked wit, who boasts of a good cook, is, in my opinion, the most powerful of social influences.

Lord Montagu is a charming person—the most amusing in the world. But for the still more charming origin of our antagonistical position, I could scarcely bear to renounce his friendship. But Princess Gallitzin will not hear of him. He is the brother-in-law of Geralda Faucon-

berg, and that is enough.

Last summer, while still in the first blush of her popularity, when the mob all but cheered her for her beauty and the coteries were disposed to strike a medal in her honour, Princess Gallitzin seemed half inclined to retaliate upon me the inexpediency I discovered at St. Petersburg of enclosing myself within the charmed but not exclusively charming circle of a petty legation, when all the diplomatic houses and pleasant societies of the place were extending their arms to em-

brace me.

Do you remember, dear Leck, how she resented our renouncing her father's humdrum soirées for the fêtes of Madame Belozelsky, or the fascinating escapades of the public balls? You fancied that it was with your extravagant demonstrations of admiration she did not choose to dispense. My dear fellow! before you arrived she was equally exigeante! I say no more; but you will readily imagine that she was not indisposed to accept an opportunity of turning the tables upon my former barbarity. She would perhaps have done so, but for her discovery of my overweening influence in society here, and of the necessity entailed upon every married woman (more especially one whose lord has official duties which engross his time and attention) to retain in society a most obedient humble servant to call her carriage and take up her defence in all companies; somewhat less menial than a chasseur, somewhat less professional than an avoué—a cavaliere servante in all particulars, save pretensions to her smiles of a nature injurious to her reputation.

In my opinion she was very wise to adopt one so attached to her interests by the ties of family connection as myself. Should you realize your project of passing through Paris this spring, on your road to visit

lord and Lady Elvinston, you will see cause to admit that nothing could have been more judicious. I will not swear, however, that the choice may not have been slightly stimulated by the moderate appreciation the prince appears to entertain of my prudence or discretion. Nothing so sure to recommend one to a woman's mercies as the per-

petual injustice of her husband!

Pending this promised visit, you inquire after the health and looks of the lady you pretend to have converted into an object of hatred, as tenderly and soberly as if, instead of hating her as you pretend, you had begun to regard her, as in duty bound, in the light of a semi-sister. In all candour, coz, I admit that I never saw her half so lovely! What the close of the carnival may do in deterioriation let us not anticipate. This constant dissipation, these nightly balls, this endless round of dressing, dancing, talking, in full glare of illumination rivalling Oriental sunshine, which renders our Paris ball-rooms so brilliant and so pernicious, will, of course, do their part towards tarnishing the silvery whiteness of her fair complexion and dimming the lustre of her limpid St. Petersburg had already wrought the evil of extinguishing their girlish expression. I own that the gentle earnestness and truthfulness which poor young Rehfeld used to point out to our admiration in the looks of Marguerite never imparted their holy beauty to those of the Lily. Still, at Rehfeld, she possessed the open look of a heart that has known no care—of a mind that has harboured no evil thought—of a hope that looks onward into life, secure of happiness through the affection of others, secure of innocence through the protection of Heaven!

At the imperial court these charms were fated to vanish. Her eyes grew restless, anxious, jealous, envious, resentful. The curious in woman's looks might have imbibed wonders of wisdom or amusement from studying as I did, in familiar life, in the first place the despairing glances of the Lily, when her suspicions were awakened, that Alfred de Vaudreuil was less than her slave, and Russia less than a paradise; in the next, the hurried and reckless looks betraying her jealous susceptibility; and finally, the fixed and tremendous glare of one who has discovered the evil dealing of the world, and made up her mind to

encounter it with evil-dealing in return!

Heigho! we are sorry Christians in this pharisaical Christendom of ours! What lessons of perdition do we impart to our successors, for the mere gratification of our own levity. I have no faith in the predatory instincts of the tiger's whelp, the callow eagle, or the sinner's child. But for the flesh of victims borne in the first instance by their ferocious elders to the eyrie or the lair, I am convinced these creatures would never acquire a taste for blood, or become sanguinary in their Nor would woman lapse into fiend, but for the pains we bestow in soiling the unsmirched snow of life before her eyes, and destroying her faith in the excellence of her fellow-creatures, till she loses first her trust in human virtue, and finally in her own!

There's a fine burst of morality for you, my dainty cousin of the Izmaeloffsky Guards! If you desire to know where Alfred de Vaudreuil picked it up, know that he dined yesterday at the Palace Notre Dame, with his reverendissimo uncle the archbishop; the supremacy of whose hock and detestability of whose chef de cuisine, insures a severe nightmare to the diners at his table, and of course a tremendous fit of misanthropy the following morning. I have long observed that

indigestion is a profounder moralist than Pascal!

In sober truth, however, I trace the rougism of my life, and hardness

of my heart to a first disappointment in love! Not what you would call disappointment;—not the interference of parents or guardians, or even the worldliness of good or evil fortune, to prevent a happy marriage. But I loved—truly—fervently—reliantly;—loved like a boy -loved like a man-with religious fervour and superhuman constancy, a woman whom, loving like a boy, I of course believed to be an angel! She made it her pride to be thought so; she made it her pleasure to appear so. She studied my ingenuous character (for strange as it may appear to you, like the rest of the tigers' whelps and eaglets, I was born ingenuous!), and practised villanously upon my candour. I often think now, what pains it must have cost her to deceive me! She might have revolutionized the kingdom with little more trouble than she bestowed in constructing those exquisite castles in the air, which she deluded me into hopes of inhabiting in her company.

Never shall I forget the night following the day in which I discovered that she had been deceiving me! Talk of the day succeeding a night of intoxication, with its head-ache and nausea? Give me, ye powers of darkness—the sleepless night of heart-ache and moral nausea that accompany the sobering out of love—a love in which we have been cruelly and wantonly deceived. Satan himself, I verily believe, took possession of me on the night in question! That woman, that hateful Camille, had overthrown the alabaster wall wherewith one's guardian angel shuts out from view, in early youth, the evil ways of the world. All was now bare, all revealed, all manifest; and some spirit of mischief was surely with me in my despair, to point out how these might be im-

proved and turned to account.

And all this was caused by the coquetry of the sex which then, for the first time, I learned to disparage! Even now, whenever I feel myself on the eve of some great mischief (I lie, I am not deliberative, I should say, whenever I find myself on the morrow of some greatmischief), I look back to Camille as to the originatress of my evil ways; and place

another black cross in my catalogue of feminine malefactions.

Be not alarmed, Leck, by this wretchedly prosy vein. Let it serve rather as an indication of the merit of the hochheimer to which I have alluded; and persuade you to accelerate your journey to Paris, where I promise to make you intimately familiar with the cellar of monseig-

neur my archiepiscopal uncle.

### Letter XLI.-From Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau in Paris, to Viscountess Elvinston, Elvinston Castle.

Dearest Marguerite, or rather, dear Lady Elvinston, accept my heartfelt congratulations! I am deputed by the princess (who, having returned at six this morning from the ball of Madame, has not yet left her bed, and is afraid of missing the post), to express to you the part which the prince and herself take in your joy on this occasion, and how sincerely we rejoice in your safety.

Well might your last letter say, dear lady, that heaven appears to prosper you and yours! Not only a child to accomplish a mother's wishes, but a boy to cheer the hopes of your ancient line! I can see you, methinks, with this new treasure pressed closely to the womanliest of human hearts, and thereby perfecting its vocation by the accom-

plishment of a new duty.

But though a spinster, and unversed in the mysteries of matronly troubles, I am aware that your eyes must not be wearied just now by much reading. I will, therefore, leave to a future day, and probably to the hand of the princess herself, the pleasant task of further gratulation.

We are grateful to the viscount for his early tidings of your safety; and trust he will not forget us in the joy of your progressive recovery.

We all wait impatiently for further news.

## Letter XLII.—From Princess W—— in St. Petersburg, to Princess Gallitzin in Paris,

My few parting words of introduction despatched through the Rouillys, dear princess, procured me so charming an answer from your hand, and such kind compliance with my request, that I should be a

monster to neglect your desire for news of St. Petersburg.

Yet, alas! what have I to relate in requital for the amusing account you give of my beloved Paris? Few and far between are the events here of a nature likely to interest the civilized world. Our carnival of the present year is simply a younger brother to the carnival of last; with the same dull features and costume of ceremony. In Paris, on the contrary, the society is always fluctuating. Every winter there arrive new English lords and ladies, bringing millions to be squandered, and sons and daughters for de-Hottentotization. Every winter Italy sends fresh princes, who sound as if they stepped out of Tasso's dedications, a witty nuncio from Rome, or from Naples some ball-giving duchess. But who, I beseech you, comes hither that can possibly help it? Now and then we catch a stray savant, wanting to write a book, be elected of the Academy, and obtain a snuff-box à portrait from Nicholas, to flourish at the meetings of geological societies, and other owl's nests, in foreign countries; or a nomadian English peeress, who has exhibited her diamonds at every other court under the sun or moon. But we never get anybody to remain, so as to diversify the surface of the most monotonous society that ever yawned at its own dulness without so much as an effort at amendment.

While Paris, like a beauty in rather more than the maturity of her charms, has recourse to all the arts of coquetry to heighten the hue of her cheeks, and brighten the lustre of her eyes, adding furbelows to her petticoat and pompons to her cap on the slightest surmise of a decline of attractions, St. Petersburg resembles an awkward schoolgirl, or lanky scholar,—half romp, half pedant;—who has neither the sense to perceive her deficiencies, nor the taste to amend them when

pointed out.

In short, we are not a bit improved since you left us. We have sung "Te Deum" for another imperial scion, and are now freezing away again, as drearily as last winter, with a somewhat worse ballet, and an

opera such as unluckily was not yet invented to perfect the probation

of unbappy Job.

In London, the variegations of political change supply contrasting chequers to the chess-board. While the Whigs are in office, the Whig lords give dinners, and the Whig ladies balls. By the time people are tired of their balls and dinners, having got by rote the menu of their chefs and hangings of their apartments, heigh presto!—the House divides one night, the ministers send in their resignations next morning, and, at a month's close, we find new countesses giving balls, and new marquises dinners; the court functionaries being compelled, by precedence of office, to become hospitable and splendid.

But here there is no change! All is immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. There is but one czar, and Nesselrode is his

prophet!

But though it has wisely suggested itself to my mind to send my letter under cover to Madame de Rouilly, through the French bag, so as to secure my philosophy from enlightening the mind of the emperor, I never feel safe in this place from the whispering of the winds that have blown over my letter, after hazarding anything so rash as a political opinion. Let me, therefore, strictly confine myself to the subject of

your inquiries.

Of Count Erloff I know nothing. He is probably with his regiment, unless sent to Siberia for a button more or less on his uniform, or a folly more or less in a list of misdemeanors not particularly scanty. I fancy the baroness is in Siberia, too-I mean the Siberia of imperial favour. No Anitschkoff balls this year, no private audiences! She is now solely and simply the wife of the envoy of ----, and were she not that, heaven knows where or what she would be. Nicholas, who manages to know everything, and when known to adjudge it, is said to have apprised her of his regret that he had not, on the decease of General Erloff, taken the estates as well as the interests of her children under his imperial protection. For some time after this, the gossips confidently anticipated your father's recall. But the emperor is rigidly just, and respects the probity and honour of Monsieur le Baron as much as the memory of the old general. Your father's services were invaluable in the adjustment of the frontier question, which had so long proved to the czar the gad-fly settled upon the flank of some powerful courser, which, potent as it is, is unable to dislodge the insect; and it has been often observed, that Nicholas seems to entertain as much respect for the faithful representative of the least foreign power as of the greatest.

Meanwhile, Madame von Rehfeld's occupation is gone. Vain are her frillings and flouncings, her garnitures and graces. The empress sees her no longer. The poorest apprentice of Mademoiselle Louise can do as much as herself; and though a giant when supported by imperial favour, she becomes a pigmy on its loss. The most one sees of her is in her box at the Bolskoy, glad to obtain, as her escort, a certain old Baron von Grünglatz, whose mineralogical work on the mines of Gamnholm and Oiama has obtained a premium from the imperial mint, and his frightful person the order of the White Eagle. He is now a personage here! No man is a prophet in his own country. How wise of the Residenz to export its superfluous produce of learning to a land so

much in want of science-mongers!

Accept my felicitations on the birth of Milady Elvinston's son and heir, which the English embassy has formally announced to the emperor, and still more upon your own escape from a similar misfortune. What is good for Peter is not good for Paul (unless, when both are czars, and the one persecutes his wife and the other his son, when a short shrift is excellent for both). Some day or other we shall be having the lovely Marguerite here as ambassadress! The lengthy viscount may chance to officiate as ambassador extraordinary at our next coronation.

He would not make so ill-looking a plenipo, when filled out with happiness and good living, and properly starred and gartered. It is only in private life such lengthy lords seem out of place. They ought to be constructed on the principle of opera-glasses, to be shut up and put

away in a case when no longer wanted.

At that epoch, who knows, our loveliest of Russian ambassadors' wives may have renounced diplomacy, and settled for the rest of her life in the land on which she has engrafted herself as inappropriately as the noble orange-tree which old Demidoff brought out of the garden of the Roman convent in which it had flourished for centuries, and transplanted, at the cost of the march of an army, to this imperial icehouse! Countess of Nesselrode of the next reign, I kiss the hem of your excellency's garment!—A rivederla, bellissima,—a rivederla!

## Letter XLIII.—From Viscount Elvinston to the Honourable Mrs. Leslie,

A THOUSAND, thousand thanks, dear Mary, to you and Leslie, for your kindly sympathy in our joy. When we were all together in October, I scarcely supposed it possible that my happiness was susceptible of much increase. Every day the world we rose to appeared as bright and shining as a world could be. I now admit my error: the peace of mind we enjoyed was incomplete without that link in the great scale of creation, and more especially to our social position, which is supplied by parental responsibility. The duchess rallies me without mercy on my consequentiality under my new dignities; but I own I begin to look at life in a different point of view, since I have felt that something of my own will be left on earth, to feel hereafter as I am feeling, and profit or suffer from the influence of my actions of to-day.

I shall not pretend to answer your questions concerning who or what this young offset of our house may resemble; regarding them as a trap laid to make me render myself ridiculous. Suffice it that he lives, roars lustily, feeds well, and promises to make a sufficient lord of Elvinston

Castle when his father is in the dust.

I had rather talk to you about Marguerite. I am never weary of talking about Marguerite! I never talk about her except in my prayers, and to my favourite sister—favourite because only a year divides us, and the first thing I can remember in this world is sitting with her upon my mother's knee, when we were loving children together. In memory of that holy tie and dear affection, bear with Mary, if I enlarge somewhat too fondly on the merits of my wife! I scarcely think I can, however, even in your estimation; for it is my delight to remember how thoroughly you all four—husbands and wives alike—did justice to her excellence when you saw her here. Never were eight people so strangely accordant in praise!

You can scarcely imagine how more than ever gentle and lovely she became, while waiting the recent event;—so afraid lest I should fancy her repining at such a moment for the companionship of kith or kin; and above all, so painfully eager in the pursuance of the religious studies to which, unknown to me—or as she fancies, unknown to me—she has been devoting herself ever since her arrival in England.

It is a subject on which, from the moment I determined on offering her my hand, I also determined to abstain from interference. I resolved that religion should never become a topic of conversation between us; because I never knew it made so between persons of opposite creed without embittering the feelings of both. If a good Catholic, my wife must infallibly be a good Christian—and I was determined to

be content.

At the bottom of my heart, perhaps, I was not without hope that the influence of the institutions of this country, and the habits of which she must be a witness in the daily life of my sisters, would lead to such inquiries on doctrinal points, as might produce a spontaneous change of opinions. Marguerite believed as she had been taught; and would have believed otherwise had she been taught better. The influence of

better teaching was what I looked to.

Can you not imagine, dear Mary—you can, for you too have a loving heart—the vague inquietude of that gentle soul, when, as she gradually began to attach herself to me with a degree of trust and affection better than all the first loves in the world—looking forward, as affection is prone to look, through a life of mutual fidelity on earth to a life of mutual happiness in heaven—misgivings came upon her that those who kneel at different altars in this world may be rewarded in a various degree in the world to come. Love taught her superstition,—superstition piety,—piety wisdom; and thus, by degrees, her spirit became enlightened. She felt that she should not have been thus disquieted, if in the right path; and paused, and questioned herself, and questioned others.

You know her diffidence of mind. To me she would not refer her scruples. But something in the frankness of Helen Rockingham attracted my wife to be more open. She made the duchess the confidante of her misgivings, and could not have chosen a better; for Helen, as modest as herself, applied to better counsellors—to Sir Thomas Meredyth, and his brother, the archdeacon—to point out the works which

ought to be placed in her hands at such a moment.

When I say thank God with me that they influenced her favourably, believe me I say it with the certainty that, had she after mature examination adhered to her mother's faith, it never would have caused me a moment's uneasiness. But there might have come a time when I should have learned to regret our difference of opinions. She would have experienced consciousness of alienation on finding her son submitted to a different form of instruction from the daughters I hope we may one day call our own; and I might have felt regret at seeing different and discordant forms of worship prevail among my children—strange in my family—strange in my country.

I watched therefore with eagerness (for Helen had in some degree betrayed the innocent confidence of my darling wife) the progress of her feelings. Marguerite said nothing! But there was a world of eloquence in her silence, when she sometimes looked yearningly after me, as I proceeded to church on the sabbath, as though she longed to

follow me and seek instruction, yet dreaded to desert the faith inculcated into her mind, with fear and trembling, in earlier years,

I had still courage to refrain from a syllable; for I was resolved that the work of enlightenment should be her own and Heaven's. It was not till a fortnight before the trying moment, which was to complete our happiness, that she one day whispered to me, "In my hour of danger, obtain for me the prayers of your church that I may live, to join at no distant day, its happy congregation."

Dreading the influence of her priest, she had some time before written to decline his weekly attendance at the Castle, accompanying the request with a gift whose munificence seemed to reconcile him to release from

a ten-mile ride across the country from Glasgow.

All is now as my utmost desires could wish. Henceforward, there will be but one faith, as there has been but one heart, in this house. Helen had her right and title to the first announcement of these glad tidings; but I made it my especial request to her to leave me the satisfaction of announcing them to yourself. To Leslie, so strict a Protestant, I am not sure but they will convey even greater pleasure, than the

birth of "MY son!"

And yours, Mary? How is my godson? Methinks I can see Marguerite and yourself proudly comparing notes, when we all meet here again at the Castle next autumn. Nay, you may compare them earlier; for the moment my wife's convalescence permits, we start for London. Though I cannot be there for the opening of Parliament, I shall take my seat instantly on my arrival. I am beginning to fancy myself more a patriot than ten days ago, and can conceive it possible to interest myself in politics. More good news for Leslie and Sir Thomas! See how right I was in predicting to you, when I wrote to announce my marriage, that a thousand virtues to come were comprehended for me in the love of the most charming and amiable of wives. I had a hard matter to obtain it. I had to wrest it almost out of the keeping of another; but I prize those precious affections all the more for the right of conquest.

Marguerite has not been quite so well to-day. She insisted upon my coming in to see her yesterday, without changing my clothes, on returning from a hard day with the harriers; and as I had ridden home from Craigie in a pouring rain, I brought more chill and moisture to her pillow than the nurses, on discovering my intrusion, could be persuaded to pardon. All, however, will doubtless end in a slight cold; though the indignation of the venerable lady who brings the baby to its mother, every time my lady's hoarse whispers recall to her memory my evil doings, knows no bounds of decorum. She has given me a whole string of commissions for you to execute in London for our nursery, a list of which I enclose. Be expeditious, or I shall have to undergo further

objurgation. God bless you!

# Letter XLIV.—From Princess Gallitzin in Paris, to Princess W— in St. Petersburg.

I ADOPT all your precautions, dear princess, in order to answer your letter in its own free spirit, having reason to think that the exposure of my correspondence with Madame von Rehfeld to undue scrutiny, spartly the cause of her decline of favour, as well as of the capricious condemnation to which my own conduct has been subjected by high authority.

I should not trouble you on this head, which appears to concern only myself, but that the ostensible motive of displeasure is the notice I have bestowed on certain protégés of yours,—the Rouillys and Madame Dombreski; and you have a right to know this, lest they should lead

yourself into similar trouble.

Monsieur de Rouilly, it appears, passed in Russia for an *intrigant*. He arrived there provided with ample means and the best introductions; but is supposed to have undertaken the journey as emissary of the liberal party of France, to which he is all the more dangerously attached, that the connection is inostensible.

The Rouillys have a charming house and society. Impossible to see two people more intelligent or more agreeable than the marquis and his wife! I found in their acquaintance all the charm you announced to me; and should find it still were I permitted to attach myself

to their coterie.

Your friends are too enlightened and too well-bred to admit within the pale of their circle those who have no passport to notice but fashion and impertinence; and with them I found a sure refuge against many a grievance. Of all the circles of Paris, indeed, theirs was to me the most delightful. I met there the first men of the day. I do not mean the first men of the Faubourg—whom one meets every where—or rather wherever the suppers are faultless, and the women faulty; but the first intelligences, the leading orators of the Chamber, the leading oracles of genius, art, science, humanity—men whose names engraven hereafter upon their tombs will suffice for epitaph; all, in short, that the exclusives call mauvaise compagnie, and that Russia calls Palais Royal; a name currently given to the liberals, as protected by the Duke of Orleans. As I write this, dear princess, I keep looking over my shoulder, like a child frightened by its nursemaid into terror of apparitions! I wonder how I dare indulge in such dangerous admissions!

After experiencing the satiety inseparable from a mawkish course of the sweets of exclusive life, the piquant circle of the Hotel de Rouilly,

I own, enchanted me.

I found there something to stimulate my faculties;—something that inspired the ambition of shining in conversation. To excite our powers of intellect, it is indispensable that some hand should be waiting to catch and return the ball; and perpetually to discharge one's sallies against a stone wall, or a heedless companion, wears out my patience. People who venture to pronounce one dull or absent, seldom consider how far their own incapacity may have provoked the mood of silence and listlessness that moves their spleen.

No one but a czarina can find pleasure in talking for ever and ever of dress; no one but an Alfred de Vaudreuil, or an English miss, be satisfied with a perpetual discharge of arrows through the meurtrières of their ill-nature. After some mouths' experience of the emptiness of such skirmishing, I began to prefer the high-toned intelligence of

the Rouilly set; and in this consists my high treason.

As to your Madame Dombreski, dear princess, I fear we must give her up to imperial displeasure without striking a blow in her defence. Though brilliant and attractive, we can scarcely approve the brilliancy and liveliness of one whose unhappy family is expiating in Siberia their political offences; and who lives in luxury, while her three brothers are reduced to destitution by the confiscation of their estates in Poland. It is not merely her political connections which render this woman obnoxious to the emperor. He disapproves her in a moral point of view. The fortune Madame Dombreski has snatched out of the wreck of her husband's may enable her to pursue her luxurious pleasures with éclat in foreign countries; but you will admit that she is little entitled to the protection or kindness of the Russian ambassadress, while sinning against Russia and against herself.

Do not imagine that I say this by way of reproach. In pure inconsideration you recommended me an agreeable acquaintance of yours:—the consideration should have rested with me, ere I acted on your letter. Such scrutinies constitute one of my diplomatic duties. I accept the fault, and repent it. But alas! repentance does not suffice. I must also accept the penalty. The emperor is displeased; and the displeasure of Nicholas is neither lightly conceived, nor lightly

effaceable.

Thanks, dear princess, for your congratulations on the birth of my step-sister's son and heir. It appears to have been welcomed right royally to this world of care, where the palace, as well as the cottage, has its hedge of thorns; a salvo of artillery from the battery of Elvinstone Castle at the risk of terrifying the poor accouchée out of her wits;—oxen roasted whole—largesse to the poor—prisoners released—chimes set ringing in thirty parishes! They could have done no more at the Residenz for the birth of an hereditary prince! But, after all, has not a wealthy peer of England twice the consequence of a sovereign of any petty continental state?

Between ourselves, dear princess (and, thanks to your precautions, the announcement will remain between ourselves), nothing can be more perturbed than the state of the public mind in Paris. I speak not of the populace—which I hold to be as little the representative of the public mind as the pavement of Paris of the soil of Frauce;—but of the enlightened classes. Great discontent prevails. The king is supposed to be intent upon suppressing the constitutional principles which were thrown as a sweetener into the cup of Bourbon succession.

imposed upon France by the united bayonets of Europe.

One of the favourite compliments I used to receive at the Hôtel de Rouilly, was an expression of gratitude to me for "rendering acceptable the name of Russia, now that France was evidently about to become be-Muscovited de lattle aux pieds."—Never, I am convinced!—Charles X. is not a Nicholas. He has neither personal consequence, nor personal influence; nor have the French so recently slipped the collar of servitude as to be readily reduced to subjection. There is no knowing what coercion may effect upon a mass;—perhaps convert Paris into a modern Rome—perhaps into a heap of ashes!

I might have remained blind to this desperate position of affairs, but for the enlightenment produced by contrasting the opinions of the farsighted Hôtel de Rouilly with the narrow bigotry and idiotic subservience of the Hôtel de Vaudreuil. In compliment to the baroness, and at my father's desire, I am forced to pay an assiduous court to the old Countess Auguste, with her collets montés of dowagers and congregation of bishops; and right truly did you describe her circle to me, as worthy the most farthingaleish days of the Escurial; a patch of feudal darkness left sticking upon the face of social progress.

I never opened my lips to the clique without producing a rustle by a universal shrug of the shoulders, and elevation of the hands, such as arises at the first representation of an opera, from turning the leaf of the libretto. But I have more than once suspected that Alfred de Vaudreuil tries to make me unpopular with them, and to drive me into the Rouilly party by provoking his own to exhibit in my presence their stiffest coat of mail, to say nothing of the concealed weapons of Jesuitry and pride. They hate me for a heraldic lache in my pedigree; they hate me as an alien from their church, yet of priestly extraction; and it is his policy to bring such topics under discussion, humiliate me by a sense of insignificance and odium, and provoke me into the expression of sentiments arising less from conviction than from the galling sense of my inferiority.

After all, the levelling principle is not for a daughter of an obscure but ancient house! The Marseillaise is not for my lips, whether as of baronial extraction, or an Ambassador's Wife. But Monsieur de Vaudreuil had always a peculiar faculty for stinging one into im-

prudence by his malice.

I remember, princess, when I announced to you my intention of domesticating my old governess in my household in Paris, your replying by a dissuasive shake of the head. I heeded not your mute remonstrance, conceiving that it purported only to warn me against the infrangible chain of early authority; and, knowing myself, fancied I knew better.

I now strongly suspect that you foresaw the evils likely to arise from her commérage with an extensive Parisian connection. Certain I am that nothing in my conversation has tended to circulate the peculiarities of my early studies. Not a classical allusion was ever extorted from my lips; nor has an unfeminine word or movement betrayed the

wilder whims of my girlhood at Schloss Rehfeld.

Yet a certain Lord Montagu, the high priest of a confraternity here which I sovereignly despise, is always attacking me with learned citations; and I am assured that a clever caricature is in circulation—nay, Alfred has whispered to me that he has had great difficulty in dissuading Dantan from converting it into one of his grotesque statuettes (alluding to my former pursuits), under the name of "Pambassadrice à la mode de je ne sais quoi;" representing me in the character of a muse, with a rifle on one shoulder, a lyre on the other, like the twins which beggarwomen hug in the streets to excite commiseration; a setter and an owl attending me characteristically on either side.

Alfred assures me that, to figure in a caricature, is, in Paris, as much a test of popularity as, in England, to be burnt in effigy, of political distinction. I could be content with a more modest measure of fame. It is not that such an attack in itself produces mortification. The insult wounds by passing through the satirical glances of one's enemies.

But, after all, these grievances, which would fall so heavy in St. Peters-

barg, where all is heavy, are easy to be borne with here, where every minute is winged like thistle-down, so that one can never guess where its perch may fall. How buoyant are the spirits of the French!—How easy is it to bear the burthen of life among such cheerful companions!

The amusements of Paris are so varied that the garb of pleasure becomes as motley as that of harlequin; nor do I wonder, dear princess, at your having taken indescribable delight in a city whose year is

all spring-whose sky, all sunshine!

Both operas are enchanting this season. We have a tenor who has the strength of Nourrit; and young Bellini is hastening hither to write operas for Les Bouffes—shining modestly in the wake of Rossini like the moon rising on summer evenings ere the sun has set. Then, we have the Théâtre Français and Mademoiselle Mars, the Vaudeville and Arnal; to say nothing of the Théâtre de Madame, arraying fine sentiment in white satin and brocade, and enveloping all that is least moral in morality in a filmy web, which serves only to draw attention to its indecency. This theatre, however, much as it is the fashion, the Ambassadrice à la mode de je ne sais quoi never enters.

When next I have a safe occasion to write, I will give you an account of a little exploit the Rouillys and I lately hazarded—an expedition to the bal de l'Opéra, which must be kept a profound secret; for though women of the best society commit the same folly once in every carnival,

and though everybody is to be met there-"nobody goes!"

Favour me in return with a private and confidential view of the reverse of the court tapestry in St. Petersburg. How diverted you would be, dear princess, by a sight of the gala side, officially despatched for my admiration!

## Letter XLV .- From Viscount Elvinston to the Duchess of Rockingham.

PRAY, dear Ellen, spare me a world of time and trouble by despatching my bulletin of to-day, in your own handwriting, to the Leslies and Sir Thomas. Tell them still, that "my lady is as well as can be expected," because it was scarcely to be expected she should be instantly well again, after the attack of cold to which she was subjected by my imprudence or inexperience.

It is all your fault, sisters! You never would let me come near your houses on such occasions, lest I should beguile your loving lords into dissipation. Comfort, however, the kind hearts of such as are too anxious concerning us, by further intelligence that the boy (little savage!) is not in the slightest degree affected by his mother's illness.

I foresee a Nero in my son and heir!

One advantage I have derived from this trifling retardation of dear Marguerite's recovery;—the suite of rooms of the western tower will be quite ready to welcome her; for though they had promised me all should be complete by the end of February, and we are now in March, thanks to the early rains, the drying of the stucco was so slow, that, though ten artists have been at work, in a pine-apple heat, for the last three months, they are only now putting the finishing touches to the arabesques.

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You can conceive nothing more perfect than these rooms, now that my design is fully worked out. Blame not the slightness of my trust, Helen, in feminine discretion, in denying you access; but I am convinced that, had I shown the designs to you and Mary when you were at Elvinston, the secret would, on some occasion or other, have transpired. Twenty times did Marguerite, as we rambled over the castle, point out to me the rooms in which the workmen were employed, and inquire their destination; but being of women the most tractable, she was content to be told that they were old-fashioned chambers undergoing repair, without being spurred by the charm of interdiction into further investigation. Most women would have suspected a Bluebeard series of headless wives, concealed behind the prohibited door; but at all times, and on all occasions, it suffices to say to Marguerite, "Inquire

no further," to be secured from further inquiry.

Now, however, that the grand secret is on the eve of disclosure, I will give you a sketch of the rooms, to which, my dear sister, you have unwittingly contributed your share. Do you remember, Helen, those sketches of my wife's, which I begged out of your scrap-book, and one on an English subject, which I stole from Sir Thomas? Frescoes after these designs adorn the four panels of the little dining-room. The first represents the convent garden in the Rue St. Victor, of which dear Marguerite was so many years an inmate; with groups of nuns, and their pretty pensionnaires dispersed among the pastures and bosquets. walls of the convent, with their curious external staircases of pierced granite, would cause it to resemble the court of a prison, but for the air of innocent hilarity of the young girls; some sitting with their work under the trees-some with a book-some skipping-some busy with their flower borders. In the front, on a stone bench, sits Marguerite, in her pensionnaire's dress (the white veil, grey gown, and ebony chaplet of a sœur grise), listening to the conversation of a venerable nun in the habit of the Benedictine order, a certain Sœur Marie, of whom you have often heard my wife make filial mention. Such is the first compartment. The atmosphere is sunny. The acacia trees, in bloom, are bright with the soft light verdure of Parisian vegetation; and "the blue sky bends over all." Contracted as is the scene, it is an animated and cheering picture.

The second compartment exhibits the quaint old structure of Schloss Rehfeld; which the duke admired so much in Marguerite's sketch, as verifying one of the curious productions of the Flemish school. This scene illustrates Autumn, as the convent garden Summer. A party is departing for the chase. The old boar-hounds are impatient to be off: and the horses, some already mounted by the jägers, some leading about, display the most artist-like variety of design. Among them, an old gray barb, the baron's favourite, is shying at the drooping tail of a peacock, perched on the marble ledge of a curious old fountain in the court-yard; while Marguerite's Italian greyhound-your friend Grazilia -is leaping up to caress the hand of the baroness, as she descends the door-steps. The baron is placing Ida on her horse; and Thérèse Moreau, the governess you have heard her talk of, is looking on in conversation with old Vossius, the venerable pastor of Rehfeld. This is the second compartment, and executed with a degree of spirit worthy of Snyders. It will remind you of that picture by Philippe de Champagne you are so fond of, at Woolsthorpe, representing the departure of the Duke of Vendome for the chase, as Grand Veneur de France. The third panel represents Winter-ay, and a Russian winter :-yet such a winter as might be dreamed of in a fairy tale, rather than among snow-drifts and sledges. The scene is the ball-room of the Anitschkoff Palace, with portraits of the imperial family; and comprehends five of the same personages, in gala attire, who figure in hunting suits in the

autumnal panel.

Nothing can be more ably executed than the brilliancy of light which my painters, following the colouring of Marguerite's aquarelles, have thrown into this picture, in contradistinction to the richer and more glowing blaze of the autumnal sunshine in the last. Of course I like it the best of the four, for it is the first in which my majesty figures;—the grouping representing no less an incident than the presentation a certain lanky Englishman to the Lily of Rehfeld! You will appreciate the modesty with which my wife has placed herself in total eclipse behind the brilliant figures of the emperor and Grand Duchess Helena, who are in conversation together in the foreground. But I can scarcely forgive her this; more especially as she has placed me to equal disadvantage, as a foil to the gorgeous uniform of Sergius Gallitzin; so covered with orders, that he seems to have undergone the fate promised to Romeo, and been taken and cut out in little stars.

This gorgeous picture will convey to you, dear Helen, a full, true, and particular notion of the magnificence of the imperial court. The empress is represented in the national habit, wearing those unique pearls and the set of sapphires and brilliants you have heard described

as rivalling the sun-gown of Peau d'Ane.

And now, dear Helen, I come to the dear fourth panel; how dear you will readily conjecture when I tell you that it includes portraits of all who are dear to me on earth! It represents the scene at my sister Leslie's of Marguerite's introduction to my family; in spring—the season of Hope—how appropriate to the happiness of that happy

moment!

My wife selected for the incident of her sketch the benediction so strangely bestowed upon her by my good old guardian. Little Dick Leslie is beside them, struggling from his nurse's arms for another kiss of his new aunt; and the contrast between the curly head and glowing face of the child, and the venerable countenance and spare form of Meredyth, has been pointed out to me by the artists as an admirable

effort of art, and worthy the grouping of Rubens.

What requires no pointing out is the excellence of likeness distinguishing you all. There is Rockingham, to the life, with his gracious and courtly air de grand seigneur; and her grace his lady wife, all goodness, serenity, and love. There is Leslie, with his stern forehead and expressive mouth, watching the new comer with the eye of a judge; and Mary awaiting his judgment with submissive looks, as in all respects the criterion of her own. In short, there you are all! Lord and Lady George, Maria and the archdeacon; with your boy and Lady Evelyn introduced by way of gracing (and charmingly they grace) the foreground, though neither of your brats was present at the real interview.

Even to the eye of a stranger, this scène d'intérieur is positively delicious. I know not, however, how we could have converted it into spring (though really occurring in May, as a splendid vase full of lilacs on the console purports to indicate), but for Marguerite's bright idea of introducing those human blossoms—the children of my dear sisters—to shed the charm of youth and infancy upon our family group!

And now, if you please, your grace's lily-white hand, that I may

conduct you into Marguerite's drawing-room-such a bower-chamber, I promise you, as was never before devised for a lady of Elvinston. You remember my sending over to Whaley a provision of Kazan alabaster, and instructions for the pounding of the same into stucco, with a view of converting the new dining-room of the castle into a Russian hall? Whaley would not hear of it! And he was right-for the thing would have been inconsistent with the roof and Saxon windows.

But, with the French single plate-glass windows of Marguerite's drawing-room, the white stucco is in fantastic keeping; more especially painted as it is in festoons of such heavenly roses as were never seen out of Gulistan, or heard of save in the poesies of Hafiz. Scattered among them, and gemming them fantastically with dew-drops, are groups of sylphs and Undines, such as I fancied nothing but a German imagination could have compassed—the festoons of flowers and spiritual

beings vying with each other in supernatural grace.

Nevertheless, my trusty workmen are right good English artists; and I cannot help fancying that their admiration of the true spirit of art evinced in dear Marguerite's designs has stimulated their genius into unusual efforts to adorn a temple dedicated to her service. I can promise you, fair sister of Rockingham, that, with all the gorgeousness and good taste of your many mansions, you possess not a single chamber so exquisitely and originally elegant, as the castle in the air I have created to form a fitting casket for my jewel of jewels.

How I long to see her seated on the sofa of sea-green silk about to be placed there to receive her and the boy on their inauguration. Titania has not a brighter bower; but the best bower of Titania has not such

an inmate!

The white scagliola thus painted has (as you will admit when you see it) the effect of the finest porcelain. Imagine, therefore, if you can, a room of Sevres china of exquisite dimensions, overlooking from its lofty windows a landscape such as Claude or Clydesdale alone can

supply, and you will behold my fairy gallery.
"But," I hear you exclaim, "the western tower has three rooms, which you told us were hereafter to be named the Lady Marguerite's suite." True; and the third, Helen, as originally planned, was an oriel chamber, an oratory to be fitted up with the fine old walnut-wood carvings I picked up two years ago at Utrecht, and was intended to contain an altar and prie dieu. It will now contain all that is holiest to my Protestant Marguerite! Your pious feelings, my dear sister, will readily supply the objects likely to be sacred to her own.

Such is the surprise I am preparing for her first day of convalescence. What a happy moment for both, or rather for us all; for we are more than "both" now. I have a darling son as well as a darling wife. You, Helen, who appreciate the grateful and affectionate nature of my wife, will understand the joy I am about to derive from her thankfulness for a new token of the devotion of every feeling of my heart and

thought of my mind.

But I have written more than enough, perhaps, to weary you. Shall I own the truth? I have been beguiling my couple of hours of exile from her sick room, to which I was condemned by the nurse, to secure her some refreshing sleep; the first hour, by a careful examination of my bright creation—the second, by describing them to your gracious grace.

Be thankful! You would otherwise have had to wait till September for a notion of the first effort of gallantry of your affectionate brother.

## Letter XLVI.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to the Baroness von Rehfeld.

I FULLY understand, my charming cousin, your vexation at the intelligence communicated by the countess. But I need not tell you that my good aunt is declining into the narrow vale of years; and that the adage of once a woman, and twice a child, holds good even where both the first and second childhood are spent under a roof graced with the escutcheon of the Vaudreuils. The Abbé Chaptal reigns triumphant in her house; and the set of doating dowagers and drivelling old gentlemen who constitute the devotees of his Infallibility, have insinuated all sorts of absurd notions into the head of my worthy aunt.

You accuse me, upon her showing, of compromising the reputation of your step-daughter. Now I ask you, in all candour, was ever woman yet compromised by any follies but her own? You say, that it is my pleasure to afficher the young princess. Verbiage, my dear auntmere verbiage? Unless Princess Gallitzin chose that my attentions to her should be noticed, do you suppose that I should dare to make them noticeable? You, so well acquainted with the usages of the world, are as well aware as myself that by a single word or look, a married woman may encourage the attentions paid her, or put a stop to them in a moment.

From the day of her arrival here the princess adopted me as the most available of her admirers; and Gallitzin, aware that some man must afford her an escort in society, and unwilling perhaps to encourage intimacy with his attachés (whom it is his pleasure or policy to reduce to the position of upper servants), was probably satisfied to see in attendance on the Russian ambassadress one who, last season, was the still more favoured attendant of Madame. The prince is too clever a man not to be aware of the advantage to be obtained with the Faubourg St. Germain, by putting forward a family connection with one of its most influential members. I do not hesitate to say, that from my friendship and dévouement, the Gallitzins, on their first arrival, obtained an immense advantage. I can assure you that, last season, the poor dear princess was the height of the fashion—the idol of Paris—the marvel of the court. Nay, even at the beginning of the winter, nothing could exceed the enthusiasm of which she was the object, both at the Château and in society; an enthusiasm, permit me to observe, created chiefly by my influence. If, at the present moment, though the Carnival has only just concluded, her popularity is somewhat on the wane, it is because she has rashly laid aside her leading strings before she was strong enough to run alone.

I need not describe to you the waywardness of her character. Of all human beings, I never saw one so confident in her own strength, or so persuaded that she was born with a capacity to bear the world upon her shoulders. What man can bear the world upon his shoulders, even if it were worth bearing? far less a woman, whose philosophy is always at the mercy of her temper and feelings. The woman least susceptible in either, is thin-skinned as a poire de bewrée—the slightest touch produces a bruise, and a bruise is fatal. A jealous or an angry woman loses her self-possession and good-manners—losses unpardon-

able in a society observant as ours!

The moment Princess Gallitzin became aware that a syllable of blame was whispered against her by la bonne compagnie, she took refuge in la mauvaise. When the strict etiquettes of the Château took exception at her innovations, she threw herself into the arms of the Palais Royal. Imagine, if the utmost wildness of your imagination can attain such a flight—an ambassadress of all the Russias consorting with the liberal party, and frequenting the Hôtel de Rouilly—the acknowledged foyer of all the political frondeurs of the day!

Such is the true cause of your lady mother's displeasure against me. Instead of really disapproving my homage to your step-daughter, she thinks I ought to have kept her in the way of the true faith. Hearing on all sides expressions of amazement at the independence of tone hazarded by Princess Gallitzin, she accuses me as the origin of her condemnation. My dear coz! when the waxen wings of Icarus melted

in the sun, the boldness of his pretensions was alone to blame.

Believe me, I abhor the set of people into which the princess has derogated. To me nothing can be more offensive than a clique that affects singularity of opinions or habits. In a society so far advanced in civilization as that of Paris, one's way is plainly marked down. The habits and opinions of society are absolute. All infringement—all innovation—is an impertinence.

You have no notion (you who beheld Paris only in its Faubourg odour of sanctity) how strange an order of things is gradually starting up here in opposition to the powers that be. The Chaussée d'Antin, extinguished for a time with Napoleon, has by degrees reorganized its modern wealth and factitious nobility; for who can pretend to repress the growth of either flowers or weeds whose roots are prospered by an

engrais of gold?

These people are setting up a rival standard to the old banner; the men in politics—the women in fashion. The liberalism engendered by that wretched compromise the Charte, has found its way even into society; and we have now a constitutional monarchy of the ball-room.

that may chance to bring about further revolutions.

Well, well! 'tis a pleasant world, so long as one looks only to its comic side! I admit that the absolutism of St. Petersburg disgusted me; and that I was the first to point out to the Lily of Rehfeld the odiousness of a state of things where all was espial, treachery, and denunciation. But reverse of wrong is not always right; and there exists a medium between the Bastille and its lettres de cachet, the Council of Ten with its pozzo and piombi, St. Petersburg with its Siberia—and the subversion of social order which beards the sovereign in parliament, and would place the aristocracy of wealth on a level with the nobility of ancient Europe. As I said before, I abhor a set of people who fancy themselves men of genius merely because astride on political hobbies; or women of genius, because the said men and their hobbies are subjected to their leading rein. It is not I, believe me, who have surrounded Ida with so absurd a body guard.

Among other freaks of independence imagine that Princess Gallitzin saw fit to select for her grand ambassadorial ball of the carnival, the night invariably appropriated by the dauphine! The inevitable consequence was the absence of Madame; and considering the favour with which Ida was received last year at St. Cloud and Rosny (because the Countess Auguste and myself had said so much in her favour), you will denote the counters are considered to the counters and the counters are considered to the counters and the counters are considered to the counters are considered to the counters and the counters are considered to the counters and the counters are considered to the considered to the considered to the counters are considered to the considered to

admit such an oversight to be somewhat more than a blunder.

Her fête, however, was magnificent. Though unwilling to exercise

much influence in the business, lest it should be supposed I had any share in the original suggestion, I took some trouble with the details. Not that I approve of a bal costumé for any one so high placed as a royal or diplomatic host. A thousand disagreeable quiproquos may arise, for which he renders himself responsible. It is too hasardé a pleasure, methinks, for any one but a woman of fashion aspiring to notoriety.

For instance, at Princess Gallitzin's ball, the English set chose to come in ancient Sarmatian costumes, representing I know not what patriotic ballad of Niemciewicz, or Mickiewicz; which mauvaise plaisanterie has, by this time, reached the Cesarian ear; and as Nicholas cannot vent his indignation on British peers, he will on the Russian

prince under whose roof the fantastic trick was played.

But this is not all. The Rouillys and the clique of the Duchesse de C—, with whom the reckless Ida has inextricably linked herself, thought proper to get up a representation of the court of Henri III., the most brilliant, but historically odious of the courts of France. It was le Roi et la Lique, represented by a society in which there exists a stronger confederacy against the throne than the haughty Guises; while the abominable queen-mother, with her virulence of religious intolerance, stalked and talked so hideously like the dauphine, that the parody was unmistakable.

You may imagine the cancans to which these incidents have given reserved in the liberal papers, or rather one of the papers which live by extracting scandal out of politics, gave, a few days ago, a most amusing version of the affair. The prince and princess are wise enough to say nothing—nothing, at least, that transpires; but I suspect there has been a serious misunderstanding between them on the occasion. The lovely Ida persists in asserting me to be the offender, by whom the bal costumé was originally planned as a pleasant sequence to our old tableaux at Schloss Rehfeld. But this I deny! The tableaux were excellent there; but if I ever adverted to them, it was without an idea of promoting a repetition of the pleasure. En province, any attempt at amusing oneself or one's neighbours, brings its own apology. But the attempts of private life to be amusing in a capital where every breath one breathes contains amusement, are somewhat out of place. In Paris, I should as soon think of making my own petits pâtés as of exerting myself for my own entertainment.

Entre nous, chère baronne, if you retain any influence over the least influentiable of her sex, instead of writing me lectures, warn her against burning her fingers with drawing chesnuts from the fire, never intended for her hand. Advise her to leave proselytism to those whose business it is to make proselytes. The Emperor of Russia has agents enough in Paris, salaried or unsalaried to do the work of espionage, and extend his party in the Chamber. As surely as Princess Gallitzin, in angling in his imperial behalf, attempts to hook so large a fish as a royal frondeur, or so cunning an one as Rouilly, she will be drawn into the stream by the weight of the former, or find the latter break away with her tackle, leaving her helpless on the shore. Ask me no expla-

nation of this mysterious hint, but fare you well.

## Letter XLVII.—From Count Erloff to Viscountess Elvinston.

I arrived in Paris yesterday, my dear sister, to spend a few days with my grandmother on my way to join you; your husband's earnest invitations having determined me to hasten my journey. He seems so desirous I should be present at the christening of your son, that I forestal my purpose by a week or two. In ten days, therefore, you will find me at your gate, overjoyed, dear Marguerite, at the idea of clasping you again in my arms, and becoming a witness of your happiness.

As regards our family interests, I have nothing agreeable to communicate, and would rather unburthen myself of my disagreeables from home, that I may have nothing to tell when we meet, likely to interpose

a cloud on the countenance of either.

In the first place, my estate of Constantinhoff has been compulsorily disposed of; the complexity of claims on the property having rendered it indispensable. Sooner would I have sold myself to servitude than that one rouble of my mother's debts should fall upon her husband.

As it has turned out, perhaps, I should have better served the interests of Baron von Rehfeld by leaving them at his charge. The sale of the property necessarily produced inquiries, which so drew down on my mother the displeasure of the czar, that the empress is understood to have received orders to withdraw the entrées from her; and under all the circumstances, if not recalled, the baron will find his position to court sufficiently unpleasant. The influence of his wife obtained his appointment, and her disgrace will probably determine his resignation.

Better so, perhaps! My mother will be happier as lady paramount in the château you described to me, dear Marguerite, in such glowing colours, than as a needy dependant on the favours of the court.

Last night, I underwent the ordeal of my first presentation to the critical eye of the Hôtel de Vaudreuil; and the venerable countess was obliging enough to find her grandson of twenty-two a considerable improvement upon her grandson of twelve. She expressed herself perfectly satisfied with my outward man. All her good humour vanished, however, when by degrees the untoward state of our family affairs became developed. She is furious that we are neither so rich nor so great as she once expected; and, possessing to excess the organ of order so predominant in the French, has no pity or forgiveness for that speculative love of show on the part of her daughter, which has so often unsettled the fortunes of the Erloffs and the destinies of her grandchildren. I felt ashamed, however, for the first time, of all the hard things I have permitted myself to say of my mother, on hearing how ill they sounded when pronounced by herself.

I am staying at the Hôtel de Vaudreuil; my visit to Paris being too limited to render its formalities insupportable. Gallitzin invited me to make his house my home; but I trust you know me too well to sup-

pose I hesitated a moment in my refusal.

I am just returned from dining there, having deferred writing to you till I could give you some account of Ida; or rather, of the brilliant, the fascinating Princess Gallitzin! Had she been still "Ida" to me, I am not sure that my account would have been much to be depended on. But the fashionable princess, the proud ambassadress, into which the

lovely and gifted girl, who at St. Petersburg exercised so strange an influence over my feelings, has suddenly risen—or fallen—is to me even less than any other woman of fashion, or ambassador's wife. I can see and judge her as dispassionately as though I were one of the marble statues of the hall through which she passes from her brilliant saloon to

her gaudy equipage.

Marguerite, it is this woman, and not you, who should have been my mother's daughter! Had Princess Gallitzin and Baroness von Rehfeld been bound together by ties of blood, as well as sympathy of character, they might have achieved an influence such as modern favouritism never yet attained! But there was a natural antagonism between them, -there was mistrust, there was covert hatred! They made friends of each other, because they dared not make enemies. They served each other, only to serve purposes of their own. Such compacts are neither binding nor effectual. The princess had other confidantes in Russia, besides her step-mother, from whom she accepted advice, and to whom she unfolded her opinions far less guardedly. By this oversight, and by means of Princess W- and the Michaeloffskoi party, rumours were conveyed to the emperor, which excited his serious displeasure; and his displeasure once excited, the baroness, conscious of the insufficiency of her influence to uphold two unpopular persons, increased the mischief by throwing over the obnoxious party, as a vessel in a storm cuts away its rigging. Such is my deduction from certain indications that have reached me from St. Petersburg.

Here, the decline of the Gallitzins' favour is still unsuspected. Count Nicholas Tcherbatoff, who is attached to the embassy, and (who, aware of my aversion to my mother's marriage, fancies I must entertain a consequent antipathy to Baron von Rehfeld's daughter) has been already diverting me with a thousand anecdotes of her hauteur, and the unprecedented system of etiquette she has introduced into her household. Attached to nobody, Ida attaches no one. The prince, to whom, like his order of the Black Eagle, she is more an object of vanity than of intrinsic value, has adopted a degree of ceremony in his household, expressly calculated to promote a formal distance between them; and the heart, which affection might have tended to soften, is hardened the more by the iron pressure of the cuirass thus imposed upon its

impulses.

Like other tyrants, however, she wears her cuirass concealed; and had I not been admitted behind the scenes by Tcherbatoff, nothing would have persuaded me but that the princess was the happiest and

most uncontrolled of wives.

Of her beauty, her elegance, I could write wonders; but you might mistake the language of enthusiasm for that of attachment. Yet, believe me, there is nothing I view more coldly than an elegant woman. She who devotes a large portion of every day to the study of dress, is incapable of good feelings or noble purposes, and an overdressed beauty is, in my eyes, a mere puppet. One might create just such an angel

out of a painter's lay-figure.

I forgave my step-sister her perfection of dress at St. Petersburg, fancying that, like your own, it was my mother's doing. But when I saw her this morning, perfumed, frilled, plaited, frizzed, flounced for the interview I had requested, till she resembled a model for the Journal des Modes, and this evening, covered with lace and jewels, arranged with the most studied originality, I felt that, if such had been the being I found at St. Petersburg, hanging with you over your work, or

accompanying your sweet voice with her scientific chords, I should never have suffered myself to become enthralled by her unequalled powers of fascination. But she was different then. Her manners and disposition appeared to me girlish as your own. How do I know. however, that this apparent artlessness was not a more studied effort

Be it as it may, I am now as safe from her influence as though she were old and withered as my unvenerable grandmother! The formal preparation of the princess's mode of welcome convinced me how much more she cared for the impression she was to produce upon me than for the pleasure of seeing me again. To charm my untutored heart, a woman must be the creature of impulse. She who rushes forth to welcome me in curl-papers, is twice as lovely in my eyes as one fifty times as fair, who waits to be prepared by the hands of her coiffeur.

I fancied that, thus heart-free, I should be mind-free in Ida's presence. Caring no more for her parade of ambassadorial dignities than for the similar pretensions in a different degree of the adjutant's lady of my regiment,—personal gêne appeared impossible. Nevertheless, while waiting for her hour of audience, recollections of all I had heard from Tcherbatoff would recur to my mind, and, thenceforward, candour was impossible. I could not refer to the rumours of St. Petersburg, or the remarks of the attachés, without the certainty of compromising persons rash enough to have confidence in my discretion; and the mere act of concealment produced embarrassment!

I consequently reverted, dear Marguerite, to you; the only theme on which we could fully sympathize and absolutely concur. She repeated to me all her recent tidings from Scotland; and truly did we rejoice together over the prosperity of your destinies. While talking of you, with tears in her eyes, Princess Gallitzin became for a time once more the Ida of other days. After all, no one can pretend to deny that she

is singularly beautiful!

To me, she made no allusion to St. Petersburg, which I accepted as an indication that she was aware all was not well. After talking of you for an hour, I was about to enter into the chapter of the Hôtel de Vaudreuil when she proposed showing me her house,—a ceremony with which I would have well dispensed, since, after the palaces of Yousoupoff and Gallitzin's namesake (though not relative), at Moscow, I was impressed only by the limited size of the state apartments. Two objects, however, they contain, which struck me with admiration,—pictures by Dubufe, one of the first artists in Paris, of the emperor and empress of Russia, after your own sketches, much the best likenesses I have seen, and combining that advantage with the grace of first-rate art.

As we stood together before the portrait of the czar, there inadvertently burst from my lips expressions of the loyal love due to him from my father's son. To my great surprise the princess, formerly so

enthusiastic in his praise, was mute as marble!

"Have I said a word too much?" cried I, at the close of my fervent

tribute to the high courage and rigid impartiality of Nicholas.
"A little!" was her reply. "The emperor is too hasty a judge to deserve the character of impartial. In some instances he is the dupe of his own prejudices."

From this, it is clear to me that the princess is aware of having been the object of his displeasure. No woman will admit the impartiality of one who has judged her severely.

At dinner, the whole mission was assembled to meet me, besides a

numerous party, including the two Vaudreuils and several strangers: and then it was I had occasion to notice the stateliness of which the princess stands accused. But, however unsatisfactory to the attachés, I can understand that, with a husband considerably more than double her age, and three or four young fellows as cool as Teherbatoff constantly about her, she may have found it necessary to assume some coldness of reserve. Thus, at least, Alfred de Vaudreuil explains away the charge.

I am going to-morrow with the Marquis de Rouilly, one of the intimates of the princess, to visit the various military depôts of Paris. The Vaudreuils did not put themselves forward to assist me, and I was,

consequently, grateful for her offer of a cicerone.

I rejoice, my dearest sister, to learn this evening from Ida that she has further good news of you. I will write again before I leave Paris. You can scarcely imagine how I long to behold you again. All I see and hear of other women, Marguerite, fills my heart with pride in the best and dearest of sisters.

## Letter XLVIII.—From Viscount Elvinston to the Hon. Mrs. Leslie.

I AM growing so uneasy on Marguerite's account, that I entreat either you or Helen, or both, to set off for Elvinston immediately on the receipt of this. Instead of recovering her strength, she is growing weaker and weaker, under the influence of a cough, from which she is rarely free. Surely, dear sisters, your experience might suggest better management, tending to her relief?

At all events, your presence would afford the greatest comfort to your

afflicted brother.

## Letter XLIX.—From Princess Prascovia Gallatzin, in Moscow, to Princess Gallitzin.

THE cold letter of thanks addressed to me, dear sister and princess, by one who writes in your name, as secretary or amanuensis (whereas the late empress, mother of Russia, my illustrious godmother, invariably addressed me in her own handwriting), shall not discourage my efforts of sisterly regard.

I promised you never to write, unless I had news to communicate. I have now to acquaint you with the recall of Baron von Rehfeld. For an appointment of scarcely two years' duration, it was scarcely worth while to sacrifice his independence by marriage with an intrigante! My intelligence is authentic, being a free-will offering from your cousin Wilhelm, who appears to understand how much I am interested in the destinies of your family.

For some time past, the favour of the imperial court has been withdrawn from the Baron and Baroness von Rehfeld; and for some time past the disgrace of the Prince and Princess Sergius Gallitzin has been

expected to follow. As you are aware that my brother has no dependence but his diplomatic career, and may by this time have learned to conjecture what must be the condition of a satellite in Russia, from which the imperial sun has withdrawn its beams, you will be perhaps induced to regret the want of caution which has rendered you and yours, or rather yours and you (for in all this you are secondary), obnoxious in a quarter where you must please to live, or you may as well please to die. When I obtain further intelligence likely to interest your feelings, rely, dear princess and sister, upon hearing from me again.

# Letter L.—From Princess Gallitzin in Paris, to Princess W— in St. Petersburg.

Your hints, my dear princess, fully prepared me for the intelligence which a letter from my father to Prince Gallitzin has just communicated—that he has solicited his letters of recall. Before this reaches

you he will probably have taken leave of St. Petersburg.

Having now some experience of the sweets of diplomatic life, I can imagine nothing more refreshing than release from official duties, performed towards ungrateful and ungracious superiors; and truly do I envy my father his restoration to the ease and independence of home. Schloss Rehfeld may not be Tzarsko-çelo; but there he is at least its master, and his own.

If, as you have sometimes assured me, he was indebted for his appointment to the interest of his wife, he is, at least, equally obliged to her for his relief from office. Her reckless administration of General Erloff's estates, the follies she has sanctioned in her son, and the evils entailed on her daughter by her selfish extravagance, so tended to disgust the emperor, that my father had no alternative but to obtain his

recall.

I am beginning to understand, dear princess, your former assurances that the chain of favouritism in your country, (I am not just now inclined to call it mine,) is anything but a chain of roses. As regards the ediousness of St. Petersburg as a residence, we have long been perfectly agreed; and I must admit that one of the chief advantages attendant on my marriage was the certainty it seemed to convey, not only of quitting Russia, but of a prolonged sojourn in the most charming city in the world. The foreign policy of Russia is of so invariable a nature, that her diplomatic body may be considered permanent as that of Austria; and while England displaces her ambassadors twice a year, according to the changes of her principles of administration, Russian ambassadors are allowed to grow grey in the country to which they are despatched in the prime of life.

I trusted, therefore, that the well-known zeal of Prince Gallitzin in the emperor's service might secure our position here for years to come; and felt, perhaps (as Alfred de Vaudreuil sometimes accuses me), as if he had been crowned Sergius I., ambassador of Russia to the court of

the Tuileries

I am now beginning to surmise the existence of such things as imperial caprices; and not a courier arrives here from St. Petersburg,

but I feel apprehensive, when he drives into the courtyard, lest letters of recall should be contained in his despatch bag. The mere anticipation suffices to damp my spirits and zeal. I enjoy every pleasure with the impression that I am enjoying it for the last time. I begin to see Russia in perspective, and tremble; for Russia, when sailing in the north of the emperor's opinion, must be cheerless indeed! This idea inspires me with a sort of desperate sense of enjoyment, that causes me to seize upon every passing pleasure with the grasp of a drowning man.

Of late, I admit, these pleasures have been fewer and further between than I could desire. You are not, I trust, a sufficiently devout daughter of the patriarch to denounce the impatience with which I have been submitting to the tardy formalities and privations of the Greek Lent. Picture to yourself my vexation at seeing all Paris released from its sackcloth and ashes, and enjoying its Longchamp and the renewal of its balls, twelve days before I could obtain Prince Gallitzin's permission to open the embassy as usual! Himself and his household being of the patriarchal church, he had no indulgence for

my Lutheran latitudes.

Though forbidden to dance at home, I rewarded myself by joining a charming ball, given on what the Greek kalends assign as Good Friday, by the Duchess of Orleans, at Neuilly. Alfred de Vaudreuil assures me that Count Tcherbatoif and his brother attachés announce that the displeasure of the emperor will most certainly be expressed on the occasion; for there are half a dozen Russians here whose business it is to despatch home intelligence of all such petty crimes and misdemeanors; and mine, I suspect, are duly noted in their book. Our tardy paschal solemnities, however, are at length happily over; and you can imagine nothing more brilliant than the revival of Paris with

its spring-tide prospects and April weather.

In Russia, I admit, the spring-burst, instantaneous as if accomplished by a fairy wand, is exquisitely beautiful. During the few days of our transit last year from St. Petersburg to the frontier, we passed from the depth of winter to the height of summer. But what signifies the summer season in a country devoid of summer pleasures? myself upon the account contained in your last of the affronts heaped on the baroness, (and which my father, though you do not say so, must have been compelled to share,) allow me to excite your regrets by reminding you of the delicious Bois de Boulogne, in which every day of this delightful weather I enjoy my delightful ride on my favourite Arab mare, Katalba. Your delicate friends of the faubourg, Madame de Montécourt among the rest, pretend that I am too bold a horsewoman; and find fault with my having enjoyed a hurdle race with my quasi brother Count Erloff, and quasi cousins the Vaudreuils, one morning in the Bois at so early an hour, that we hoped none but the birds were astir to chirrup rumours of the exploit.

I have not, however, judged it necessary to deprive myself of my rides in deference to their squeamishness; for after a gay ball, or the heat of the crowded Opera, nothing can surpass the refreshment of a gallop home from St. Cloud through the Bois, which, as usual at this

season, is fragrant with the incense of myriads of violets.

Alexis Erloff came hither, three weeks ago, with the avowed purpose of spending a day or two with his grandmother on his way to Scotland. That he is still here proves only that he has discovered in Paris all the charm to which you and I, dear princess, are (unluckily for our Mus-

covitism) so grievously susceptible. Lady Elvinston is in delicate health; and Alexis assigns as a motive for delaying his journey, that she is not at present strong enough to support the emotion of seeing Nobody tells half the truth in such matters;—far less, the whole.

The fact is, that Count Erloff is entranced by the Circean charms of delightful Paris, and enchanted by his first glimpse of the pleasures of society. For, after all, Petersburg and Moscow, though grand and imposing as capitals, have nothing that can be really termed society; no circle in which intelligence of mind and brilliancy of wit are to be found in combination with refinement of manners and independence The diplomatic world may enlarge upon the delicacies and difficulties of deciding some frontier dilemma; but it requires centuries of civilization, and all the tact which they create, to assign the exact boundaries, enabling the two great worlds of luxury and genius to dwell together in amity; a fusion rarely achieved without con-fusion. I know no truer criterion of the state of civilization in a country, than the terms on which people of talent are admitted into society. Russia is not yet forward enough for a grand seigneur to accept the company of a man of genius on any other footing than that of a protégé.

At the Hotel de Rouilly, Alexis Erloff sees for the first time the artist, the man of letters, the orator, hand-in-hand with the aristocracies of rank and fortune; and the sparkling sherbet he is enabled to quaff amid such associates is, indeed, somewhat more intoxicating than the barbarous quass of Moscow. As he candidly exclaimed the other night, after one of these reunions, "With such mental excitement as this house affords, should I have found it necessary to fly to the excitements of life to relieve the monotony of existence? Secure of such delightful companionship, never, never, should I have become a gambler!"

But for the political principles of this agreeable mutual friend of ours, dear princess, I should say with Alexis, why did not such a man remain in Russia, teaching to St. Petersburg that most difficult branch of learning-the savoir vivre! Perhaps it is with the view to improving my own existence there, on the recall which our friends are so eager to prognosticate, that I expend so much of my time in attempting the political conversion of the marquis. I am not without hope of modifying his liberalism to a point that may render him in the Chamber an

important partisan of the Russian cause.

Alfred reminded me last night, amid the usual efforts of my zealous patriotism, of the fate of the savant at St. Petersburg, who, in attempting to fly a kite, brought down a thunderstorm! But my kite affects a more modest flight, and my laurels shall shield me from all electric peril. As to relinquishing the society of such companions as one meets in the Rouilly set, because the Baroness von Rehfeld has intimated to Monsieur de Vaudreuil that they are in mauvaise odeur at the Anitschkoff, were I to comply with every idle caprice she chooses to stamp with an imperial crown, what benefit should I derive from my residence in this happy land? Besides, such is the insincerity of that woman's character, that when apparently acting in concert with her, I am still forced to be always on my guard.

We shall be spared the bore of St. Cloud this summer, the prince having promised me an excursion to Baden-Baden, instead of our villeggiatura. He pretends, indeed, that he has negotiations to transact with parties who can meet him at Baden without exciting suspicion. But I suspect he is apprehensive that my intimacy with so many persons unpopular at the Tuileries may have caused our exclusion from St. Cloud, an exception which, if noticed, would give offence at home.

Entre nous, notwithstanding the probability of this, to escape those formal parties is to me a great relief. At St. Petersburg the formalities of the court were endurable; for there was nothing better to amuse one. Here everything is better! It is a serious loss to have a whole day subtracted from one's pleasures, in a city where every hour, every moment has its apportioned charm. A thousand occupations have arisen for me from a thousand new acquaintanceships: dinners at the Rocher, parties de campagne, practising parties for the Mazurka, which we are trying to get up for the breakfasts of the Hôtel de Rouilly; all preferable to the ceremoniousness of a royal circle, where, as Monsieur de Rouilly observes, "Les roses sont ou soucis ou pavots."

To-night I am going with the Rouillys to the Frères Provençaux, and afterwards to one of the petits spectacles,—a charming party, including the Vaudreuils and Alexis. The prince is engaged to an official

dinner chez le Ministre de l'Intérieur.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

I have been debating whether to send this letter as it stands, or let it afford confirmation of the axiom that the pith of a woman's letter is in the postscript. But I cannot resist telling you that the "charming party" (to dress for which I left my despatch unfinished) has ended most disastrously!

We had a most delightful dinner. Alfred, by whom it was ordered, had caused the room to be entirely decorated with violets in compliment to Madame de Rouilly, Madame Juste de B—, and myself; having discovered that we had agreed to wear those fleurs de saison in our

bonnets.

Unluckily the prince met me on the stairs as I was proceeding to my carriage; and having been apprised by Tcherbatoff (who, from his longer residence here, is always intruding some officious and specious piece of advice) that the violet has long been accepted as the emblem of the liberal party, from some absurd legend connected with Napoleon's return from Elba (a thing past and forgotten, except by a superannuated attaché like Tcherbatoff), requested me to change the bonnet, which, he

assured me, might give rise to unsatisfactory observations.

You will readily suppose, it was a matter of perfect indifference to me whether, on any other occasion, I wore a bonnet trimmed with violets, or primroses, or any other spring flower or weed. But I was vexed at being obliged to break through an engagement with my two friends in somere a trifle, more especially as I was satisfied that Madame Juste would suspect me of a desire to eclipse her by assuming a dress different from her own; and to avow the interference of the prince would have been too mortifying. I made my appearance, therefore, at the dinner party coiffée en cheveux, leaving my bonnet at home.

I could not have done worse. The innovation produced inquiries which created suspicions; and between jest and carnest, half the secret was extorted from me.—"Defense positive de porter la violette," provoked a thousand hazardous allusions, and though I flatter myself of being as independent in opinion as is compatible with official service, I could not approve the pertinacity with which Madame Juste and one or two others kept alluding throughout dinner to my penance of

imperial subjection.

At length, to my shame be it spoken, tears came into my eyes; and scarcely was the dessert on the table, when Alexis burst forth into expressions purporting to reduce at least the men of the party to silence. You know enough of the *ménage* of our friends the Rouillys to be aware that there exists no exorbitant excess of conjugal affection between the marchioness and her husband. It must consequently have been pure perversity that put it into his head to resent the wordsof Alexis, as an offence towards his wife. According to Alfred de Vaudreuil's version of the business, he has Carnival wrongs to expiate towards her, which a  $coup \ d'epée$  in her honour atones with interest.

He accordingly spoke a significant word of rejoinder to Count Erloff; although, so perfect is the high breeding of the marquis, that everything passed off without exciting my suspicions. At the conclusion of the dinner, we repaired, as had been previously agreed, to the Vaudeville theatre; and even on our return home, stopped together to take

ice at Tortonis—all apparently on the happiest footing.

Little did I expect that a mere party of pleasure would produce such evil results. But alas! Alfred de Vaudreuil has just visited me with the sad news that Alexis has been seriously wounded in a duel by Monsieur de Rouilly! They met at an early hour in the Bois, Alfred officiating as second; and Erloff has been brought home in a precarious state to the Hôtel de Vaudreuil.

Judge of my despair! As if it were not enough for Marguerite's brother to meet with mischance on my account, the *esclandre* of such a business will be most displeasing to the prince—most injurious

to me!

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Just as I anticipated! I am to be the victim of this odious quarrel. The prince protests that he concluded me to be engaged to dinner at the Hôtel de Rouilly—an engagement he disapproved for political reasons; but that fearing to provoke the charge of jealousy, which I once hazarded against him as the origin of his disapproval, he passed it over without notice. Had he been aware, he says, that it was at a café our party was to assemble, he would have issued a decided prohibition. He accuses me of want of ingenuousness in the affair, as well

as want of discretion.

It is in vain I assure him that, within the last week, the immaculate Duchess de C—— has given a dinner at the Frères Provençaux—Monsieur de Tcherbatoff being of the party. He replies, that Madame de C—— is not an ambassadress. Even when I plead that the Apponys have entertained parties at the Rocher since we have been here, he reminds me that had he been with me, the case would have been different; but that for a married woman in my position to dine at a restaurant without her husband, is contrary to les bienséances. In short, I perceive that he has already had his lesson from Tcherbatoff; who, as the intimate friend of Alexis, is, I conclude, irritated by his misfortune.

Were it not for the harsh manner in which I am judged on this occasion, the wound of poor Alexis would have occupied all my thoughts. But for the prince to see no blame but in myself, when in fact his own absurdity about the bonnet was the origin of the evil, has hardened my

heart. I am angry with him-myself-the whole world!

Tcherbatoff has privately assured the prince, that nothing would

have been easier than for Alfred to make up the quarrel, since no ill will previously existed. What motive can he have had? Alas! I tremble to think of all these things! As I am sure you will be anxious to know the sequel, I will write again in a day or two.

Letter LI.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil to the Baroness von Rehfeld, at Schloss Rehfeld.

It is truly vexatious to me, dear baroness, to find that my good aunt has most injudiciously chosen to acquaint you with Erloff's petit malheur. It would have been better that you should know nothing of it till he was well enough to write his own account. I have no fears but that this will shortly occur; meanwhile, be assured that he is doing

well, and an object of solicitous care to your whole family.

Your excellent but prejudiced lady-mother has doubtless represented the matter to you in the light in which it is her pleasure to view it; and which is altogether unjustifiable! Indignant at the injury received by her grandson, she persists that his wound originated in a quarrel with the Marquis de Rouilly, for the bright eyes of Princess Gallitzin, whom her dowager twaddles accuse of coquetting with both. Not a syllable of truth in all this! I was present when the misunderstanding took place, which arose out of the colour of a bonnet or flower—I forget which. You know the impetuosity of Alexis. To do Rouilly justice, nothing could exceed the grossness of the insult which his wife received from your son; nor was there any alternative but fighting. Had it been otherwise, I should have exerted myself to the utmost to prevent a meeting fraught with consequences disastrous to all parties. Alexis will recover from his wound long before the princess recovers from the evil reports to which it has given rise.

With the formality of the emperor's views on such subjects, I suspect it is lucky for you, my charming cousin, that you had left St. Petersburg previous to the arrival of the news. But to you, the sublime wrath of Nicholas is henceforward unimportant. You are now an empress in a little Russia of your own; and the Gallitzins alone remain exposed to the double-edged or flaming sword of imperial displeasure. Luckily, the princess has high courage, and a degree of spirit which accounts for her venturing to dine au cabaret, and possessing the eye and hand of a rifleman. Mais que voulez-vous?—Reflect on her extra-

ordinary modes of education!

I shall write to-morrow a further account of Alexis—who is proceeding as favourably as possible.

#### Letter LII .- From the Honourable Mrs. Leslie to Sir Thomas Mereduth.

Would, dear sir, that I had better news to communicate! But on our arrival we found dearest Marguerite far worse than we expected. I had attributed Elvinston's anxiety to over-affection; and in truth, poor fellow, his mind is completely overset. But it is fully accounted for by the apprehensions of the physicians. Nothing can exceed the delicacy of Lady Elvinston's condition. All their hope is that she may recover sufficient strength to enable her to visit a milder climate. The air of Clydesdale has proved far too rude for her.

I can scarcely describe to you the hectic beauty of our poor invalid! You used to admire the soft, brown, spaniel-like beauty of her eye. Brightened as it now is by fever, and enhanced by the unnatural and transparent whiteness of her skin, on which a variable tinge of bloom is occasionally perceptible, I tremble to look at her. A superhuman beauty seems to have already invested her ever-angelic nature. What would I give to behold my poor sister, at this moment, coarse, rough, robust, without a trace of this terrible loveliness!

You will expect me to tell you something of the boy. Alas! like Elvinston, I have ceased to regard him with pleasure. I fancied it would be impossible for me to take this future representative of our family into my arms, without emotions of triumph. Instead of this, my very heart was drowned with tears when he was presented to me by the nurse. I could not help fancying the poor infant already bereft of a mother's care, and left to comfort the affliction of the most unhappy of husbands.—Farewell, dear sir, I will write again in a day

We are hourly expecting the arrival of Marguerite's brother from Paris; though I could almost wish the visit deferred, for she is in no

state to support the smallest agitation.—Farewell.

#### Letter LIII .- From Alfred de Vaudreuil in Paris, to Viscount Elvinston.

ALEXIS is anxious, my dear Elvinston, that I should apologize to you for his delay. For a week or two to come, I fear, he will be unable to An unlucky coup d'épée, of which it will be as well to say nothing to the viscountess, is the origin of this contre-tremps.

You know his headstrong temper; you know his passion for Princess Gallitzin, and her insatiable coquetry; and between these two ingredients what so easy as to get up a duel? Alexis was forced to go out with Rouilly—the leader of the most factious branch of the liberal party here; with whom a quarrel would consequently be no injury to Alexis in the eyes of the emperor, had the dispute regarded politics instead of the fair fame of the Russian ambassadress.

Altogether, it is an unfortunate affair, and compromises every one concerned in it. For the public, never satisfied when they have got a good thing, not content with the scandal of a duel, must needs aggrate the mischief by pretending that the dispute arose in an orgie aucabaret; in which Rouilly permitted himself to indulge in observations upon the impropriety of the princess's dress, which were naturally

resented by a man who makes no secret of being at her feet.

There is just enough truth in the story to make its falsehood the more injurious; and you may imagine the horror and indignation of the Hôtel de Vaudreuil at such an incident in its annals. The countess, already displeased by the manners and habits of her grandson, talks about les mœurs de la régence affected by the liberal party; and the united inquisition of her dowager set has excommunicated the poor dear princess as a woman who fences, smokes, shoots flying, and wins a hurdle chase in her leisure hours, though assuming the greatest hauteur of etiquette in her tenue d'ambassadrice. Every one of them has some anecdote to relate of the lovely Ida—plus ou moins vrai—but alike fatal to her dignity, if not to her reputation.

All this, my dear fellow, strictly between ourselves! I judged it better to explain to you the real cause of Erloff's delay, in order that you might prevent the newspapers from reaching the hands of his sister; for I sincerely trust that, by this time, my cousin is sufficiently recovered to read, write, and amuse herself, as well as to fulfil her habitual vocation of amusing and delighting all around her. I would willingly think of you as the happiest of men, by the perfect recovery

of the most perfect of wives.

Believe me, my dear Elvinston, I envy Alexis his journey to the north; and would fain break away from this place, and accept your kind invitation that I should bear him company. But alas! this is out of the question. It is always so difficult to leave Paris! Somebody or other is sure to have claims upon one, rendering it impossible to move. I do not mean tailors or horse-dealers; but one is pretty certain to owe oneself to some fair tyrant or other, who has not the generosity to lengthen one's chain.—Adieu.

### Letter LIV.—From Baroness von Rehfeld to Princess Gallitzin.

You will not be surprised, after hearing that we have been several days established at Schloss Rehfeld, to learn that I have scarcely strength or courage to take up my pen. You know this place, Ida, and

can appreciate all I must be feeling!

Under all the circumstances of our return, the Residenz became so insupportable from the number of officious connections of the Rehfeld family crowding round me with condolences, and I implored the baron to alter his plans and proceed at once home; more especially as the grand duke received us with anything but the graciousness due to a man who undertook the mission to Russia solely at his highness's solicitation. He was even unjust enough to place the recall of the baron solely to my account. But in this he acted upon his knowledge of the feebleness of your father's character. The baron has become so timid

from having been placed in collision with a despot like Nicholas, that he has not spirit to assert his independence in the presence of his ungrateful prince. After all, what so very alarming in the pomps and glories of a mere sérénissime of the empire? I assure you I felt any-

thing but extinguished by the frowns of the grand duke.

Before I had been four-and-twenty hours in this place, however, I heartily repented my rashness in persuading the baron to quit the little capital, where one was at least surrounded by civilized beings. Do you remember that, at St. Petersburg, I used sometimes to advocate the cause of Schloss Rehfeld against you and Alfred de Vaudreuil? My dear Ida, I talked as women are apt to do—on a subject of which I knew nothing. Schloss Rehfeld arranged for the reception of a brilliant party; Schloss Rehfeld, rendered endurable by the society of a few people of the world, was a very different spot from the dreary old barrack it now presents to my endurance; a culprit in solitary confinement, in the midst of woods displaying scarcely a vestige of foliage; and flowerless gardens ornamented by the ghost of a dilapidated fountain; mildewed apartments to reside in, and, by way of attendance, bumpkin servants, who fly before one's face as though one had taken the château by assault and entered it over a breach.

Heavenly powers! what a prison!—and how little did I appreciate your patience in having supported it so long, or your merit in becoming even what I found you, amid the rudenesses and vulgarities of such

provincial obscurity!

After all, poor Moreau had really excellent qualities and effected wonders here. I miss her exceedingly. Her tact and good-will managed to keep out of sight a thousand disgraceful evidences of German want of decency and refinement. Nor can I help recalling with shame and regret, now that our establishment is of necessity so contracted as to bring constantly before me the discomforts of the place, the obligingness which caused her accident, when carrying down my chess-box and work-box during the preparations for our departure for St. Petersburg. Would I could only behold preparations for departure in this house again!

I scarcely dare look forward. The idea of a whole summer spent at Schloss Rehfeld overwhelms me with despair. Not a human being with whom it is possible to converse—not a single luxury to render solitude supportable—not even a book to read! One might as well ask for a roc's egg, even at the Residenz, as a new French novel; and the mouldy old library here looks only fit for the loft of a cathedral.

If you did but know, Ida, how I envy you! For you at least I have provided happier destinies than for myself! My own, I shudder to think of. Even the company of the baron would be a relief; but after his long absence, your father has so many interests and avocations here connected with his estate that he has no leisure for home; and I have scarcely patience to see that he is positively pleased to be once more in this horrible place! Such is the happiness of feeble characters. Such the beatitude of mediocrity, content with mediocrity!

The relief which, for a moment, I anticipated, of an excursion to Carlsbad in the summer will I see be denied me; for the affairs of the baron are so thoroughly disorganized by the enormous sum he was forced to levy to supply the noble dowry I persuaded him to bestow upon you, as well as by the ruinous cost of his establishment at St. Petersburg, the arrangements of which were calculated with a view

to a long residence in Russia, that it will be impossible for him to encounter the expense of a second household, for some time to come. He assures me that, notwithstanding his fine rental, he has not a florin at his disposal. I suspect that his nephew, who is now on hostile terms with him, is doing his utmost to increase the inconvenience.

Conceive, therefore, I entreat you, the horror of a series of years, in the decent interment of Schloss Rehfeld, without one pleasant object for

contemplation.

I have serious thoughts of proposing a journey to Paris, to visit my mother, whom I have not seen these two years; and perhaps, prolonging my expedition as far as England, to see my dear Marguerite in her new country. A year's absence would be rather an economy than an expense to the baron; but this project is at present completely

en l'air.

One of my numerous annoyances in this place arises from the tone of authority assumed by the old servants; whom (having resumed their places at the head of the establishment during our absence, my own invaluable maître d'hôtel having declined to accompany me back to Germany) I am for the present obliged to tolerate. I can assure you that the old woman who was formerly your father's nurse and who looks like a vivification of Rembrandt's portraits, received me as though she were the Baroness von Rehfeld and I a stranger. Je lui en fas mon compliment! The old woman was your nurse too, I find, as well as the baron's, which gives her a double title to authority. But on this she does not insist; for I find, that ever since your marriage with a foreigner and heretic, old Sara and her pastor have dismissed you from their good graces. So they would me from Schloss Rehfeld, I doubt not, were it in their power. I almost wish that—but no matter!

I was about to inquire of you what is worn in Paris this spring, in the way of peignoirs and cornettes. But of what use to ask the question? Who is there here to appreciate one's taste? At St. Petersburg there was at least the empress. But were you to despatch all Paris in a packing-case to the Residenz you would gratify only the customhouse officers. At Schloss Rehfeld even their approval would be

wanting.

I have little doubt that Prince Gallitzin will throw upon my shoulders an undue share of the blame which the emperor seems disposed to attach to our united families. But before he married or accepted his appointment to Paris, he knew as well as I did the exact amount of my influence; and that it was of a nature, on ceasing to be advantageous, to become a serious disadvantage. For Nicholas, like most persons who have recourse to secret policy, has no forgiveness for those who attempt the exercise of similar manœuvres upon himself. Anything resembling stratagem or secret influence, of which he is the object, is revolting to him; on the principle, perhaps, that sweets are nauseous to the confectioner. It was a rumour of a political correspondence between us, whispered, in the first instance, I suspect, by Princess W—, which first excited his displeasure. A hint of this was given to me by one of the Michaeloff set; and I consequently lost no time in having it intimated that the correspondence thus denounced contained nothing more perilous to the state than details of Parisian fashions for the amusement of the empress; when lo! to my great surprise, this was accepted as a still greater offence than the supposititious state papers for which your packets of broderies and ribbons had been at first mistaken! From that moment, no chance of patching up a peace. My position became too disagreeable; and your father had

only to demand his letters of recall.

Take it from me, princess, that no Russian ambassador can ever long retain his post in Paris, London, or Vienna, unless he have a brother in the imperial household, or coadjutor in the imperial cabinet. Half the communication between these courts and that of St. Petersburg, must always be ex-official. But it must not pass through the hands of a woman. The emperor is a Hercules, who, in matters of government, will never exchange his club for a distaff.

At all events, though your letters need no longer contain le Journal des Modes, oblige me with les cancans of Paris, as some sort of relief to the cawing of the Rehfeld rooks! If you could only understand the ennui which overpowers my mind, or rather the desperation of impatience I feel when moping in my bergère; looking out on the sunshine glaring upon the fields, and listening to those wretched birds who seem to rejoice at the return of spring as if such creatures had the pretension of enjoyment!

I have indifferent accounts of Marguerite, who appears to have taken cold in her confinement. But Lord Elvinston writes coldly and briefly; and I am looking forward to the visit of Alexis to his sister for more detailed news of her health. Should any reach you in the in-

terim, mention them in your next.

Your father is absent with his foresters. I have therefore no message from him. He is far from being in good spirits, and has become more taciturn than ever, now that conversation might be a relief. I could almost fancy that his return to Schloss Rehfeld conveyed as unwelcome reminiscences to him, as impressions to me. Heigho!—to think that this letter will reach Paris, while its writer remains a fixture at Rehfeld!—O weh!

## Letter LV.—From Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau in Paris to Princess W, in St. Petersburg.

MADAME LA PRINCESSE,—You will, perhaps, be displeased at the liberty I take in intruding upon your time. But having at command the same sure channel of correspondence enjoyed by her excellency Princess Gallitzin, and remembering with pleasure the kindly notice I used to receive from you when you were in Paris, and I domesticated in the Hôtel de Choisy, I throw myself on your goodness to forgive a presumption instigated by affection for her excellency Princess Gallitzin, whom I was the original means of presenting to your acquaintance.

Of all her friends or associates in St. Petersburg, you, madam, are the only one of whom I ever heard her speak with confidence and regard. The princess respects equally your independence of opinion and refinement of taste; and is above all grateful for your kindness, previous to her extrication from an unhappy home. You have, therefore, some influence over her mind. She is not an amenable person. Early

supremacy produced early self-reliance; and it was only by aggravating that fault by new concessions, that I was enabled to obtain sufficient influence over her feelings to complete her education in the points insisted upon by her father. Accustomed to the well-established courtesy of Parisian life, I had not the courage for the stormy passions which must have accompanied an exercise of authority sufficient to break her aspiring spirit; or for the religious controversies which must have ensued between two persons of opposite creed, had I called in the aid of the only arm strong enough to subdue the unruliness of a perverse temper, in the person of her pastor.

I say this, inadam, in extenuation of my own apparent weakness in having suffered the contraction of such faults of character as deprive me of all influence over her who was once my pupil, and is now completely my mistress. I trusted to the reaction of her own splendiabilities and the coercion of civilized life, to render my lovely charge as reasonable and well-bred as she was bold and aspiring. But, alas! I

trusted in vain.

I admit my fault.—There are certain spirits which not even the pressure of the mass suffices to subdue. The Ambassador's Wife remains the wilful Lily of Rehfeld, with whose waywardness I bore too patiently, so long as it instigated only opposition to her step-mother, hauteur to her poor old governess, or coldness towards the friends I pressed upon her notice. But now that her excellency's eccentricities have become injurious to herself, now that her faults of character are working her ruin—I tremble, madam, at the results of my own weak subservience.

In my fault, or my repentance, you, madame la princesse, can feel little interest. I adduce them only in extenuation of the failings of the young princess; and as a plea for venturing to intreat your interpo-

position in her favour.

Alas! madam, my poor Ida is on the eve of a precipice! She has been trusted and tempted with power beyond the strength and capacity of inexperienced girlhood; and the greatness of the delegation has even weakened a judgment which, but for this premature stress upon its

powers, would have expanded into strength and greatness.

Here she has been surrounded, or let me use the true word, she has surrounded herself with bad advisers. The friendship of the Hôtel de Choisy she refused, as not sufficiently fashionable for her taste; the intimacy of the Hôtel de Vaudreuil she rejected, as tiresome and officious. The prince himself, on their arrival in Paris, hastened to present her in a circle combining the highest ton with the most polished corruption; and when jealous of her success in the world, and resentful of the supremacy to which she aspired in her double capacity of a beauty and an ambassadress, these people began to treat her less regardfully, she was at the mercy of the first agreeable circle which opened its arms to her on terms of her own dictation.

This, madame la princesse, was one especially recommended to her by yourself; and, acquainted as you are with the supreme *agrément* of the Hôtel de Rouilly, it will not surprise you to learn that her excellency found there a compensation for the slights of the greater world whose

impertinence she had provoked.

But the Hôtel de Rouilly of to-day is no longer the one with which you were acquainted. At the time of your sojourn in Paris, the Rouilly shared, with many other persons of high consideration, the animosity of the court; and it may usually be observed that persons in overt

opposition to any constituted authority, excluded from and yet covetous of public distinctions, are apt to adopt or accept even ineligible modes

of notoriety.

The Marquis de Rouilly, a mere boy at the period of the restoration of the Bourbons, cannot have derived from his pagehood in the court of Napoleon any very decided political tendencies. Belonging, however, by birthright to the liberal party, and entitled by his noble fortunes to a prominent place in society, he has assumed a somewhat perilous post in the lists of fashionable notoriety, and affected to give the law in maters of usage, where it is usually taken, because derived by all people ranking high in the world from the authority of the court.

Forgive me if I am tedious in these expositions. I am desirous of affording an extenuating origin to the peculiarities of a friend of your

own.

The habits of the Hôtel de Rouilly are not those of the Faubourg St. Germain. The manners of the Faubourg are immutable—those of the Rouilly clique a compendium of the customs of foreign countries. England, Russia, Italy, have each contributed their share to the habits of a house which might have done better to remain exclusively French. Monsieur and Madame de Rouilly feel themselves accountable to no one. He is a man of talent, and a roué, with the best head and worst heart in the world; she, a pretty thoughtless woman, who retains of her brief reign over the heart of her husband only the worldly views and insatiable love of pleasure with which he inspired her. In the Marquis these levities are modified by first-rate abilities and high ambitions; in his wife they degenerate into the empty frivolities of a woman of fashion, and not of the high caste which carries its own apology.

Such companions, madam, you will allow were perilous examples for Princess Gallitzin; so young, so beautiful, so ill prepared by early training for the ostensible position she has been called to occupy. They gave her no bad advice—would that they had! for advice is a thing which Ida was never yet prevailed upon to follow; but they afforded her example, the most pernicious of lessons, when the exemplars are of a fascinating nature. At the Hôtel de Rouilly, I find, the utmost freedom of political and religious discussion is promoted, with all the power of the first talent of the day. Women distinguished by their beauty, and men eminent for their talents, unite to impart a grace to certain levities of manner and habits, which the French call foreign, and which foreigners invariably call French. Mesdames de Choisy and de Vaudreuil, with many others of the old school, regard with disgust the fatal charm of this modern freedom. But how are we to wonder that a lovely girl, devoid of domestic sympathy (for the prince is as far removed from her by difference of years as by the peremptory nature of his official interests), should have been readily influenced by persons so attractive, who not only placed themselves at her feet, but readily adopted into their circle every individual likely to enhance its attrac-To what motive the Count de Vaudreuil was tions in her eyes? indebted for his entrée it is difficult to conjecture, his politics being so totally opposed to those of the marguis. But the tennis-court and jockey-club bring many extremes into collision; and I have reason to believe that the intimacy of Count Alfred at the Hôtel de Rouilly existed long before the arrival of her excellency. Why they should have applied to you, madam, for an introduction to Princess Gallitzin, is to me an unfathomable mystery. Till the arrival of Count Erloff, however unfortunate the infatuation of the princess for a society calculated to excite a prejudice against her in the mind of the emperor, no incident had occurred likely to expose her to the animadversions of society. But the reckless manners of the count, and, to do him justice, let me add the generous frankness of his character, could scarcely fail of bringing about some catastrophe. His eyes were soon open to the devotion of Monsieur de Rouilly to his step-sister, as well as to the jealousy of the marchioness, not of her husband, but of Count Alfred, who is said to have been her former admirer. I have reason to believe that he remonstrated with her excellency with brotherly regard concerning the evils all this might entail upon her; and it is possible Ida may have allowed his remonstrances to transpire; for, from that time,

there was disunion and evil-will among the parties. Your familiar acquaintance with the Parisian world, madam, will readily bring to your recollection a certain Lady Fauconberg and her daughters, whose withering bon-mots have thrown more than one ménage into disorder. To them, it appears, the princess is peculiarly obnoxious, as the means of withdrawing the Count de Vaudreuil from their society. Disappointed in their expectations of becoming, through Count Alfred, the intimate friends of her excellency, they have become her vindictive foes. To these people who, in pure levity of gossip, have injured many a fair reputation, are attributed the scandalous version of a duel which, believe me, originated solely in the circumstances I have detailed. Where people are disposed to quarrel, any pretext will serve. The colour of a flower afforded, in this instance, grounds for a chal-All the details that may have reached you of an insult arising out of scenes of intemperance and indecorum are utterly,

utterly false! I address myself to you, madame la princesse, in the earnest hope of interesting you to circulate, by your high authority in St. Petersburg, the contradiction of these shameful rumours. The influence of your character and station will afford vital aid to the career of the princess. But I have a still more important service humbly to implore; even a letter from yourself to my dear pupil, the princess, acquainting her with the prevalence of reports seriously injurious to her character, and the prospects of his excellency her husband. Your authority in a matter of ton will necessarily weigh more strongly with her than mine; and on learning from you that these wild dinners and suppers, these equestrian feats in the Bois, and shooting parties au tir, are decidedly mauvais genre, she will be, perhaps, induced to relinquish her present habits and companionship, adopted in the mere caprice of the moment amidst the exaggerated dissipation of the carnival.

This is no moment for the aristocracy of any country to degrade itself in the eyes of the people by social irregularities. Above all, the lawless spirit of Paris requires to be intimidated, not by the strong arm of authority, but by the imperative influence of moral strength in the higher classes. There is something more than contempt in the laugh with which the populace contemplates just now the follies of its superiors—there is menace!

Pardon, madam, I entreat, this long letter. The subject of it is nearest my heart; and I have no other means of exercising my good offices in this city which, henceforward, must arbitrate the destinies of one whose good gifts and attractions render her only a more prominent

mark for the envenomed shafts of slander.

Deign to accept my humble apology, and the assurance of my profound respect.

### Letter LVI.-From Viscount Elvinston to the Count de Vaudreuil.

MY DEAR VAUDREUIL,—Your account of Erloff's mischance falls unneeded amid my own severe afflictions—for Marguerite is dying! Her precarious condition precludes all hope. Had her brother, as might have been naturally expected, hastened to Scotland instead of loitering at Paris, he would have seen her alive—comforted her last hours—and escaped the hazard and shame of a foolish quarrel, for a heartless—I had almost written worthless—woman!

I shall take the precautions you suggest, that the heart of his beloved and incomparable sister be spared the knowledge of his danger. It may be as well, also, to spare him the intelligence of her approaching end. My sisters are with her. Heart-broken as I am, you will kindly

dispense with further details.

Write again speedily; and, if possible, with better news.

### Letter LVII.—From Princess Gallitzin in Paris to Baroness von Rehfeld at Schloss Rehfeld,

If I delay, my dear baroness, to answer your letter, you will perhaps imagine that the murmurs it contains never reached me. I fully sympathize in your ennui, as an inhabitant of Schloss Rehfeld. Sull it does not strike me that you would have been happier if exiled to your son's estate of Constantinhoff; though even that retreat from the displeasure of the emperor has, I am assured, been disposed of.

The evils of your position appear irremediable; affording one among ten thousand instances where people have to pay the penalty late in life, of too free an enjoyment at a former period. But for such chequers in our destinies, the dispensations of Providence in this world

might appear too unequal!

On mentioning to the prince the contents of your letter, I was in expectation that, from the long intimacy existing between you and the claims of General Erloff's memory upon his friendship, he would have hastened to offer you an asylum under his roof, as long as you felt inclined to accept it. To my great amazement, he lost not a moment in apprising me that, whenever it pleased you to visit Paris, the doors of the Russian embassy must necessarily be closed against a person so odious to the emperor. I was at liberty, he said, to see you at the Hôtel de Vaudreuil, or wherever else I pleased; but not in a house of his!

Such is the stability of worldly friendship; or rather, such the difference between friendship and confederacy! I once believed you to

be friends. I admit my error.

I ought, perhaps, to be less surprised at all this; for my own experience of the hollow nature of worldly affections has already taught me many a bitter lesson. How often have I heard the French praised for

the cordiality of their manners. Mere artifice! Their pretended warmth purports only to beguile unwary natures into laying themselves open without reserve. To unbosom one's heart on the temptation of this seeming candour is suicide—moral suicide! Do what you will, these people look on with indulgence; but with the action the indulgence disappears, leaving behind the utmost bitterness of criticism! If you only knew how wantonly those persons have dared to judge me, who affected to place themselves slavishly at my feet without daring to lift their eyes to my level—you would admit that your world of Paris is scarcely less cruel in social life than in political.

From Monsieur de Vaudreuil you have already heard that your son is all but convalescent. In a week's time, Count Erloff will be able to depart for Scotland without a trace left of his disaster. It is I alone who have sustained an irreparable injury; yet must remain here to combat the unfair interpretations of society. Not that I blame Alexis. He behaved, as he always does, with spirit, frankness, and generosity. If he did not pause to consider, as Monsieur de Vaudreuil would have done, that an injudicious friend is sometimes the worst of foes, it is

because he is susceptible of nobler impulses of nature.

The political aspect of Paris grows daily more alarming; nor do I contemplate with much regret the diminution of favour shown me this year by the royal family; as it would grieve me to become interested by more intimate communication in the destinies of those who seem intent upon precipitating themselves and their country into an abyss of ruin. The Bourbons, who took no warning from the first revolution, will scarcely take the advice necessary to secure them from a second. Their hour, I greatly fear, is approaching.

Though forbidden by the prince to return to the Hôtel de Rouilly (a prohibition which I hold to be mainly the origin of the evil reports in circulation against me), I am still sufficiently open to the approach of those who, belonging to no party, have their eyes on the proceedings of all, to hear indications of a coming storm which may only too soon

explode over this devoted kingdom.

I hope to learn shortly that you are better reconciled to Schloss Rehfeld; for the Countess Auguste being on the eve of her departure, as usual in the month of May, for her nephew's château in Burgundy, (which I understand to be many degrees more lonely and comfortless than your present abode), and our poor dear Marguerite being ordered to a milder climate, there appears no resource but resignation to an

inevitable evil.

You are fully justified, I admit, in reminding me of my former impatience of home. The solitude of Rehfeld and the cawing of the rooks were, if possible, still more hateful to me, two years ago, than now to yourself. But the follies of the world have taught me wisdom. Splendid servitude has reconciled me to homely independence; and the struggle of the evil passions of society, to the monotonous simplicity of a more tranquil life. I could bear with Schloss Rehfeld now! Anything rather than hollow magnificence which, though your own means may have called it into existence, you are grudgingly permitted to share.

This last phrase will startle you with the conviction that I have at length tardily and unwillingly recognized Prince Gallitzin's motive in seeking my hand to have been less my intrinsic merit, than the possession of a dowry indispensable to his interests. It was merely to enthral my weak vanity he pretended such singular admiration of my

talents and accomplishments; it was simply to secure the emperor's interference with my father, that he pointed them out to Nicholas, as eminently qualified to adorn and utilize the pomps of diplomatic life. Both were taken in the snare—the discriminating czar, the vain Ida von Rehfeld; and the object of the ambitious intrigant was accom-

plished

That the abilities he pretended to admire were valueless in his eyes, is sufficiently proved by the arbitrary manner in which, from the moment of our arrival here, he dictated, even in the most trivial particular, the line of conduct I was to pursue. I have little doubt these misères were not less peremptorily dictated to his excellency. But since he knew himself to be a mere slave of the cabinet at home, why inveigle me by pretences of confidence reposed in me by the emperor, and the credit I was to derive from my skill as a negociatress? Who, that has any experience of Russian tactics, would dream of giving more credit for ability to any of its agents, than to the senseless ploughshare obeying the guidance of the master hand?

On this point I am thoroughly disabused; and to have been so blind a dupe, proves me to be weaker and more insignificant than the feeblest of those whose eyes it was my ambition to dazzle with my

palms and laurels!

Can you wonder that, with such bitterness of mortification in my soul, I should descry peace and happiness at Schloss Rehfeld? Here my life is wretched! Perpetual reproof from St. Petersburg has soured the temper of Prince Gallitzin. All that was once coldness has become harshness; and the stern hauteur I used to admire as an accessary of official dignity, becomes revolting now that it serves to chill the comfort of my own fireside. We meet only when the forms of society require our being seen together; but, at all other moments, bitterly am I made to perceive that I was sought by this cold-blooded calculator merely as the stepping-stone to his fortunes; and that, not having secured his footing as he anticipated, I am become an incumbrance indeed!

I may have failed to accomplish all the objects of the prince. I may have proved an incompetent agent in the crooked paths of diplomatic policy. But I have erred because swayed by the uncautionable and uncontrollable feelings of girlhood. The very youthfulness which for all others constitutes a charm, has consequently become a fault in the eyes of my husband; and he would prefer to see me old and ugly, if cool and artful, than endowed with all the charms and truth of un-

guarded youth.

Under such circumstances, what happiness can I find at home—what enjoyment abroad? I never return from my gay engagements without expecting to be saluted on my own threshold with tidings of our recall, communicated with all the virulence of a man of baffled ambitions and broken fortunes! Even society has lost its attractions. My rides in the Bois, my pleasant parties, have ceased to charm; and the brilliant opera, the dazzling soirée, pass before my eyes like the unreal illusion of a dream!

Whichever way I turn all is perplexity—all mortification and care! The insulting faces of those Fauconbergs meet me at every turn, as if triumphing in the cruel injury inflicted upon us by their bitter kinsman Lord Montague; who had scarcely returned to England, before he rose in the House of Lords to expatiate upon the foreign policy of Russia, in one of his able sarcastic speeches: expressly alluding to the

appointment of Prince Gallitzin, who, by the aid of a pretty and artful wife, was to extend the Russian party in Paris—just as the French ambassadresses despatched by Napoleon for that purpose to the court of Alexander, are known to have served the purposes of France in St. Petersburg.

This attack, probably the mere effusion of party feeling, is attributed by the prince to personal resentments, produced by my insulting con-

duct towards the family of Fauconberg.

Admit that it is enough to disgust me with society to have my most trifling actions thus magnified into importance! Every word, bow, smile of mine, must be so calculated as to avoid all possibility of offence to those who may not be offended. I must submit to cringe to the insolent, and bear with the malevolent, lest my enemies should become the enemies of Russia! Oh! for the humble independence of private life! Oh! for the privilege of avowing my honest feelings, and exhibiting my honest resentments! This caution, this cunning, these mean and paltry acts, abstract all enjoyment from the sphere of life, to achieve and secure which I must submit to their degrading exercise! Believe me, dear baroness, I am little to be envied. Anxious, harassed, miserable, not a human being on whose affection I can lean for comforts—not a friend on whose counsel I can rely! Poor Thérèse is the gossip of the Choisy set—Monsieur de Vaudreuil the serpent which not even the peace of paradise could disarm of its venom. No—I have not a single friend! Despise me as you may for the pitiful avowal; but I say to you, as I say hourly in the depths of my heart, "Would, would that I had never quitted Schloss Rehfeld!"

Tell this to my father. Perhaps it may solace him in his humiliation. Tell it to old Sara; it may possibly appease her animosity. Tell it to my good pastor; and oh! that it may induce him to intercede in

my behalf for the mercy and protection of Heaven!

Letter LVIII.—From the Duchess of Rockingham, Elvinston Castle, to Sir Thomas Merydith, in London.

REJOICE with us, dear sir, my poor sister is showing some slight

symptoms of improvement.

The genial mildness of the weather has done wonders for her; and the physicians assure Elvinston that if no check should throw her back, towards the end of the month she may with safety be removed to

London on her way to a milder climate.

Still, we only rejoice with trembling at the hopes unfolded by this announcement. Her condition is so fragile that, to look at her, you might imagine her already a being of another sphere; nay, it may appear mere superstition, dearest sir, but in every word uttered by Marguerite there breathes so angelic a spirit, that I can scarcely persuade myself she still belongs to this earth. Such forgetfulness of self—such consideration for others—such impassioned yet holy tenderness for my brother—such dread of increasing his affection for her at the moment when she is satisfied that they are on the eve of separation. But I have not courage to dwell upon these things!

And then, the earnestness with which she strives to interest us in behalf of her child—the almost playful arts by which, when her enfeebled strength admits of her entering into conversation with Mary and myself, she tries to indicate the course she wishes pursued in his education when she shall be no more, without exciting our alarm on her account, or giving us to suppose that she is aware of her situation!

To no one, I believe, has she spoken unreservedly on the subject,

with the exception of old Mr. Brentwood, the chaplain, with whom she has had many private interviews. As to Elvinston, he has too little

self-command to be entrusted with the truth.

Even my husband, usually so firm, is completely unnerved by the danger of Marguerite. The duke regarded her, in fact, rather as an elder daughter of his own than as a sister-in-law; and my poor girls, from whom I hear daily, are overwhelmed with grief at the prospect of losing so dear a friend. But for the desire of avoiding unnecessary trouble and anxiety in the castle, I should send for them here. The sight of Marguerite's pious resignation in quitting a world where everything courts her enjoyment, and of which the pomps and vanities have never one moment disturbed the serenity of her mind, is a lesson of precious import!

I do not say, think of us with compassion! I am convinced, my dear sir, that you, so much the friend of our family, have afforded your

earnest prayers to your afflicted ward.

You shall hear from my sister or myself in a day or two.

#### Letter LIX.—From Princess Prascovia Gallitzin, Moscow, to Princess Gallitzin, in Paris.

HAVING reason to infer, dear sister and princess, from the tenour of yours and my brother's letters, that there no longer reigns between you the good understanding which at first seemed likely to atone for the absence of conjugal affection, it occurs to me that Sergius may perhaps leave you unduly ignorant of the critical position of his affairs, both public and private. I therefore make it a duty of sisterly tenderness towards you to forewarn you against any new excesses, likely to exasperate still further against you the mind of the imperial family.

Let it suffice that you have done your utmost to secure your husband's disgrace, by reserving your diplomatic favour as ambassadress of all the Russias, for persons in open rebellion against the czar—for runaway wives and factious foreigners. Let it suffice that you have rendered yourself an object of ridicule to court and city, by your opposition to the manners and habits of the country to which you were despatched as the representative of a great empire. Let it suffice that you have defied the dictates of decency and morality (I conclude, I must not yet permit myself to say of virtue)—thus discrediting, in your own person, the honour of the Russian government.

For, know that my brother's recall to St. Petersburg would be his sentence of ruin!—Sergius has not a rouble of fortune, save as a public functionary of the empire. With his abilities and the imperial favour never yet withheld from the deserving of our house, his pro-

spects constituted a patrimony beyond mere opulence. That it has been wasted of late with such lavish prodigality and folly, you, dear sister and princess, have, I understand, wholly to answer for. The same hand which inflicted the first wound on the bosom of the infirm sister

has inflicted a mortal stab upon the fortunes of the brother.

Nevertheless, madame, though it needs only his removal from his present appointment to reduce him to destitution, know that the pride of Sergius Gallitzin, as a high-born Russian gentleman, lately induced him, when smarting under the severity of an imperial reprimand, to solicit his recall to Russia; and had the emperor propitiated his request, you—the proud Lily of Rehfeld—the haughty ambassador's wife—would have been at this hour—a beggar.

But the luxury of being even beggars, at will, is unknown to the satellites of our imperial throne! The czar, who is master of the lives and fortunes of his servants, bade him remain great, powerful, envied, feared—repining, mortified, degraded! Be the irksomeness of my brother's situation what it may, he must retain it so long as his services are judged, by Nicholas I., to be essential to the interests of Russia.

I hasten, therefore, dear sister and princess, to warn you against the renewal of follies such as drew down upon your husband the bitter reproofs he thus madly resented. The emperor may so far change his views as to accept the next tender of resignation hazarded by his ambas-

sador—of which gracious concession BEWARE!

I am fully aware of your estimation of St. Petersburg, even when viewed through the golden medium of favouritism and fashion. Judge what you will think of it hereafter, when avoided as a pestilence by that servile world, to which an imperial frown conveys all the terrors of the plague—as the repining denizen of a dull, dreary abode in this uncourtly city—and doomed to share even that with the paralytic aunt and crooked sister of your husband! The temper of that husband and his qualifications for domestic life, you are probably beginning to appreciate. Again, therefore, I say unto you—BEWARE!

### Letter LX.—From Princess Gallitzin, in Paris, to Viscount Elvinston, Elvinston Castle,

June 28th, 1830.

THE letters of Count Erloff to his kinsmen of Vaudreuil, my lord, conveyed such satisfactory accounts of the progressive recovery of dear Marguerite, that it appears probable you may be induced to profit by the present favourable state of the weather, to accomplish your purpose of seeking a milder climate.

I am, perhaps, less disposed than when I had first the honour of knowing you, to confide in the discretion of Monsieur de Vaudreuil; and for reasons with which it is unnecessary to trouble you, am desirous to abstain from a correspondence with Count Erloff. I am consequently compelled to address you personally, on a subject too dearly involving the interests of your family to admit of scrupulous reserve.

Do not, I entreat you, unless the physicians have pronounced it indispensable, do not bring our poor suffering Marguerite to France at this

moment! I have it from a sure authority, that, before the summer is over, a great political crisis cannot fail to relieve the overcharged horizon of public affairs: and in this country a political crisis involves terrible consequences. This is no idle suggestion, no woman's panic. The impending danger is uncontrovertable. The pleasures and frivolities of Paris continue, it is true, with unabated ardour;—but one of the highest authorities in the realm has been heard to observe, that we are "dancing upon the ashes of a volcano, that threatens a new eruption."

Do not misjudge the motives or importance of this warning. I live among those who not only watch, but create the variations of the political horizon. From all they avow, and still more, from all they conceal.

I perceive that an hour of peril is approaching.

It is not in France, as in your own country; where those who resist oppression are apt to pursue the oppressors with contempt rather than vengeance.—In Paris, Revolution is a word of terror; and again I entreat, my lord, do not at this moment hazard, by removal, a life so dear to you—so dear to all!

## Letter LXI.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil, in Paris, to Count Erloff, in England.

You are I trust, by this time, grateful, my dear Leck, for the zeal (you were half inclined to term officious) which I displayed in expediting your departure. I had a thousand reasons for my pertinacity.

In the first place, the state of your sister's health now admitting of an

In the first place, the state of your sister's health now admitting of an interview between you, it would have been unjustifiable to withhold from her the comfort of your presence, isolated as she is in a land of strangers. In the second, the irritation of mind of Gallitzin promises anything but well for those entitled by affinity, even collateral, to interfere between himself and his wife. I can perceive that he is furious at the publicity drawn upon his domestic position by this unlucky duel. His excellency is the sort of man who dreads nothing in this world so much as exposure. The habit of living at court in perpetual subservience to autocratic reprobation, has inspired him with a deference to the decencies of life, a sort of worship of decorum, as the wedding garment insuring him an entrance to the marriage feast of imperial favour, more influential than the strongest sense of morality! Propriety, not virtue,—decency, not innocence,—subjection to the opinions of the world rather than to the laws of God—constitute the principles of his artificial life!

"Point d'esclandre!" is in short the cry of this well-bred husband; in the very teeth of which, his pretty wife, whom we both know to be unquestionable in essential points, has rashly caused the hollow world

to ring with echoes of her indiscretion.

Paris is so little accustomed to the exercise of gratuitous virtues, my dear Leck, that nothing in the way of our mutual asseveration would tend to convince it that you were generous enough to be run through the body in behalf of a woman whose generosity had not preceded your own. I ask your pardon for the want of candour of my loving

countrymen—but so it is. They believe you to be a far happier man

than you are!

Your rash impetuosity necessarily drew the attention of the prince to all this; and writhing under the irritation of the injury to his reputation, not to his wife's-inasmuch as his reputation constitutes a portion of his diplomatic stock in trade-I was by no means certain that he might not judge it expedient (his only rule of conduct) to extinguish a lesser scandal by a greater—by calling you to account for having fought for his wife. I agree with you, that Gallitzin has no more feeling than one of his own malachite vases. But the mind has its passions as well as the heart; and the frenzy of disappointed ambition is almost as strong an incentive as the anguish of wounded affection.

Take it for granted, therefore, my dear Erloff, that I have done a kinsman's part towards you, by hurrying you forth from this troubled sphere. You are better in England—you are safer in England. Your ungenerous hint that I am desirous to appropriate to myself the future defence of the lovely Ida, I pass sub silentio; convinced that the reflections of your solitary journey must have convinced you of the impossibility that a man of my detestable temper and temperament should be inclined towards the championship of a woman who could console herself for the loss of his hand with that of old Gallitzin; and for the loss of his heart, with that of a Mirabeau manqué like Rouilly; for dispute it as you may, the marquis is the magnet which drew her from the midst of the double and triple circumvallations of the court party.

In a word, mon cher, accept my congratulations that you are at length in England, out of this hubbub of disturbances, private and public, and offer me yours in return, that my eyes are open to my own perils and

dangers.

Would I could add that those of the royal family were open to theirs; for woe is me, and woe is France, the obstinacy of the august chief of the Bourbons is unequalled, save by that royal kinsman of his in Spain, who abided on his throne to be asphyxiated with charcoal, rather than have the brasier removed by unprivileged hands. Surrounded as he is with tout ce qu'il y a de plus Polignac, what chance of his enlightenment? Our ministers are unpersuadable that France is undeserving the admirable principles of government under which Austria prospers, and Russia, like a walnut tree, brings forth its fruits; and they persist in rendering unto France the things that are Metternich's.

The strong arm of absolute power should never be uplifted unless certain of its strength; the child who has once found the courage to fling back a wholesome medicament into the face of the nurse, being scarcely likely to submit to a second dose, still stronger and more nau-seous. These are homely similes, Leck; but I am beginning to foresee the conversion of my gold epaulet into worsted lace. La Fayette is still alive, though balf in his dotage; and betwixt a driveller who flatters the insolence of the mob, and the driveller who would coerce it, ninety-

nine to one in favour of the national guardsman!

You will expect to hear something of la belle Ida. With the exception of a glimpse of her gay equipage dashing through the Bois, I have not seen her since you left Paris. I have called once or twice at the embassy, but without the good fortune of finding her visible. One night at the opera, indeed, I spent a few minutes in her box; and but that the mirth of woman is as often the result of despair as joy, should

have been inclined to say I never saw her so cheerful. Decidedly, she never looked more lovely. You might have thought otherwise, who desire to see her only in her gentler and more feminine moods. But just as I used to delight in hearing her talk flimsy Montesquieu, at the Hotel de Rouilly, among a knot of potitical intrigants, who fancied they were worming out of her the secrets of the prince (as if he ever intrusted her with any on which he was not intent on the circulation!) just as I used to enjoy the sort of air of band-box stateswomanship with which she ventured to debate with Laffitte and Passy, with the audacity of a child handling the wires of an electric batteryam I now amused to observe the air of triumphant joyousness under which the disappointed coquette strives to conceal the hysterical agitation of her heart.

But for these wild emotions I should never have felt certain that she had a heart. So well has she played her part for the nearly two years I have known her, that I believed her of almost as icy a temperament as her husband. It proves to be such ice, however, as that under which the impetuous waters of the Neva rush onwards to the ocean; and nature is perhaps avenging upon the woman of twenty the outrage committed against herself by the girl of eighteen, who pretended to be ambitious full a dozen years before so mature a passion comes into season in the human heart. Passions, my dear Leck, are not like green peas, the more valuable for their precocity—a simile, you will say,

worthy of the Frères Provençaux!

You will be glad to hear, by the way, that my brown hack is come back from Alfort as sound as ever. I told you, when I refused the thirty louis offered for it by Rouilly, that it was a mere cold.

Your grandmother is off to Les Genêts; being Vaudreuil enough to take up her quarters in the old château, intolerable at this season to anything but the spiders and dowagers of the family. I suspect that the poor dear countess is more than usually in want of a little country air this year, after the fatigue of nursing a graceless grandson; and the Abbé Chaptal of the peace and innocence of our Burgundian paradise, after the pein forte et dure of reforming such a reprobate. Myself and Jules he had long resigned as hopeless; or rather, he was too well satisfied of our good courtiership to apprehend that we should ever lose ourselves by neglecting those forms of devotion exacted even of its uttermost page of the presence, by the court of Charles X. and his daughter-in-law; which, I verily believe, is capable of creating a new St. Bartholomew.

You, my dear Erloff, offered strange temptations to the old people. Like all who feel deeply, you appear to be easily impressionable; and they flattered themselves they had secured a submissive convert, in the most unsophisticated individual that ever passed the barriers of Paris! In my opinion you feel too strongly to have approached civilized Europe nearer than Tatary. You are the Muscovite of four centuries ago; a wilful barbarian, in spite of possessing five languages—painting like Salvator—singing like Tamburini—and fencing like Coulon. Your école militaire has much to answer for in affecting to give a French education to Russian natures. It is attempting to turn a snuff-box

out of a fragment of Oural granite.

All this the poor dear old abbé soon discovered. In you he saw that he had to deal with an Erloff, not a Vaudreuil; and I am convinced he remains persuaded that the gentle, loving, pious Marguerite was as much a god-send in the family of so rugged a father and worldly a mother, as the manna and quails in the wilderness. Your speedy recovery was, I suspect, little forwarded by any intercession of his or your grandmother's; unless, indeed, as a means of expediting your departure from Paris. But no matter. In Burgundy they will have ample leisure to expiate their own sins, and those of every branch of the family. I hold myself absolved of all I may feel inclined to commit

for at least three months to come.

In the meanwhile know that the misadventures which have placed our lovely Ida in so unfavourable a position with regard to the court and the Faubourg, have a thousandfold enhanced her popularity with that public nuisance which calls itself the public. The vulgar fingerpost, notoriety, has pointed out her beauty and grace to redoubled admiration; and I can account for the speed at which her Alezans are made to dash through the Champs Elysées, by her natural desire to escape the thousand eager eyes on the look out for a glimpse of the loveliest of ambassadresses. I scarcely remember to have seen a greater sensation excited in Paris in the way of fashion.

Secondary to these interests, but secondary to no other, comes the evil position of party-prospects at this moment. Jules, who is in waiting at St. Cloud, protests that no anxiety on the subject prevails in the royal family. But rashness is not courage; and on the brink of a precipice the blind man walks as firmly as usual. I am almost afraid, my dear Leck, that you imported with you into Paris the infection of your governmental principles of St. Petersburg; for Polignac might at

nich and Nesselrode. Do not imagine by this allusion that I estimate them as three old women.

Here I keep my eyes and lips closed as to what is passing; for we have a black-book police, almost as offensive as that of your czar-ridden capital. It is my duty, however, to speak to you, as Lady Elvinston is

this moment form a third in a group of political destinies with Metter-

on the eve of a continental tour.

Pray let me hear how you found her, for I am no longer in sufficiently frequent communication with the Russian embassy to dispense with your tidings. En'attendant, je t'embrasse d'une amitié vive et fraternelle!

# Letter LXII.—From Princess W—, in St. Petersburg, to Princess Gallitzin, in Paris.

DID I not know your superiority to the opinion of the world, my dear princess, I should have despatched to you, long ago, my condolences on the lapidation I am assured you have been undergoing among the Parisian throwers of stones. But so great a philosopher has the comfort of knowing that envy is the shadow of merit; or, as you once told me, in answer to my animadversions on your adored czar, that "slander, like the sun, darts fiercest on the highest head." Your vanity has, consequently, every cause to be reconciled with the malice to which you have been subjected. One of your favourite sages has told us, that it is only against the gods there can be blasphemers!

For my part, I would sooner stand in your place, ambassadress from one of the great powers to the greatest, and be assailed from week's end to week's end with all that envy, hatred, and malice can devise, than live the life of the blest at St. Petersburg, where there is no one witty enough to invent scandal, and no one charming enough to attract it. Again, I say, bear with your destinies! You have married a man of doubtful fortune, or rather a man who must earn his fortunes by diplomatic service. How much better than the noblest estate this country affords, if conveying the penalty of being enjoyed on the premises. My dear princess, take my palace in St. Petersburg, take my estates in Novogrod, and give me in exchange your hotel of the embassy, within reach of Christian society, and under the cross-fire of the batteries of the unchristianly scandal of united Europe! Rather be a mark for all that could be said or sung, written or printed, in the way of defamation in Paris, than irreproachable here, as the shrine of our Lady of Kazan!

You have now my candid view of the misfortunes that seem to weigh so heavily on your mind. To tell you that the news had not reached us were to deceive you. But there is no one left to heed the report. Even the wreck of Madame Erloff has disappeared from among us; and during your short sojourn here, you were personally known to few besides myself. The merely pretty girl of one carnival is effaced by the merely pretty girl of the next; and Princess Sergius Gallitzin vanished

too instantaneously to have left a trace.

Do not, therefore, agonize your feelings by the dread that the eyes of Europe are scowling upon you, because a few old ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain are cold in their curtsies, or a few young men of the clubs too impetuous in their bows. You will survive the shock. The wounds that reach us from without are usually superficial. So long as your

conscience is clear, no chance of mortification within!

As to the evil interpretation of St. Petersburg, even if seriously convinced that its ambassadress in Paris was a woman of light conduct, believe me, it is far more interested in the fact that the empress was seen in her caleche yesterday, on the Streha Road, in a bonnet trimmed with dahlias, cornflowers being the thing in season; and were it hinted that Prince Gallitzin had sent you back to Saxony in a white sheet, either living or dead, the Nevskoi Prospekt is more interested to learn that the emperor has ordered leopard-skin housings to some regiment of cuirassiers, or that a new ballet is in rehearsal at the Bolshoy.

With all your strength of mind, belle princesse, do not fall into the error of weak ones, by fanoying that the sun will cease to rise and set because the coteries are spiteful, or the czar ungracious. If, like me, you had endured last night the leaden weight of a party compelled to find amusement in four hours of La Mouche, simply because not one of us had a word to throw to the others which the most complaisant complaisance could dignify into a mot, and because it is more civil to yawn over one's cards than into the faces of one's friends—you would feel, to the mind's core, the comfort of being within reach of a dozen amusing theatres, and a dozen arch-amusing people, to assist one in spurring on the lagging march of time. The worst of Paris is Paradise, compared with the best of St. Petersburg. What signify a few caricatures? A touch of the knightly spur of chivalry is easier to bear than the trampling of a wooden boot!

For the future, dear princess, you must content yourself with counsels instead of news. To-morrow I leave St. Petersburg. It behoves me to see something more resembling a tree than the shrubberies of my pretty villa can furnish; and I accordingly exile myself for three months to my estates in Novogrod, taking with me five carriages full of

the people among whom I have been boring myself through the winter. Triste ressource! but wanting it, I should be driven to picquet with

the papas of my villages.—Farewell! Heaven speed you.

P.S.—By the way, is it true that everything in Paris is ripe for a revolution? The few French or English papers admitted here say little on the subject. But Madame Hugon received yesterday a cargo of summer bonnets from the Rue Vivienne, accompanied by an ouvrière en capotes who waited upon me with the last number of "Le Follet," and brings word that there have been attroupements on the Boulevards. She has a brother, a journeyman printer, who advised her to make as much haste out of Paris, as the Metz diligence would allow! This may be all nonsense. But sometimes such fragments of populace as journeymen printers foresee more of popular movements than those who, seated on a throne, have their eyes dazzled with the perpetual glitter of diamonds and gold lace.

I would say more, but have worlds of preparation to make for my journey. All the furniture of my boudoir travels with me—my shrines, my saints, my musical instruments, my library; and my confessor and French maid are both claiming my attention to the ceremony of their

removal.—Addio!

## Letter LXIII.—From Princess Gallitzin, in Paris, to Baron von Rehfeld.

My letter, my dear father, congratulating you on your safe arrival in the home of your ancestors remains unanswered; but I can make full allowance for the multiplicity of business, which must perplex you on

your return to Rehfeld after so long and ruinous an absence.

Well do I remember how, even on your annual visits from the Residenz, you used to be beset by Johann and Sara, land-stewards and foresters bleach-masters, and miners, tenants and their husbandmen! It gives me pleasure to recur to those bright September days when they used to arrive in succession, each laden with a gift for the hand of his beloved lord, and a grievance for his ear! I used to consider them importunate, because they interrupted my own free talk with you, after a year's separation. I owe them a greater grudge now, for preventing your answering

my letters.

Long absence from you and home has rendered me more sensible than I used to be of the value of such associations; and after the glarge and empty volubility of Paris, the comfort of our simple German cordiality would be, indeed, acceptable. I envy you the warmth and truth of your welcome to Rehfeld! I envy the respect conceded to all your words and looks by those who behold in them a guarantee of the protection accorded by your fathers to theirs, and to be accorded to their successors by your own. Less adroit of hand, less fluent of speech, perhaps less intelligent of mind than the bustling, prating, superficial people of this brilliant country, how much more soothing to the heart, in the prolonged intercourse of life, those homely words of which every syllable is frank and true, as if instinct with responsibility to heaven!

You will not think me tedious for enlarging upon all this; for well

do I remember, my dear father, your warning me at St. Petersburg, nay, at Schloss Rehfeld, against the partiality I was imbibing for the levities of a foreign country. I did not listen then. But experience has inflicted the lesson upon me with schooling far more rugged. I have learned to love my fatherland through the harshness of an adopted country. I have learned to appreciate the value of parental

protection on finding myself disregarded by my husband.

I say not this resentingly. When it was proposed to me to become the wife of Prince Gallitzin, no inducements of tenderness were held forth. I was told, that if I pleased I might become wife to an ambassador, an ambassador high in favour with the emperor; and the glittering bait captivated my girlish fancy. The Paris described by Mademoiselle Thérèse, and painted in such glowing colours by Monsieur de Vaudreuil, brandished its bauble of Folly in the distance, and eagerly did I answer to the appeal.

And now I am here, dear father, indeed a princess-indeed an ambassadress-all that my vain ambition preferred to the tranquil obscurity of Rehfeld; -and the most miserable and desolate of human beings.

Last night the prince set off express for St. Petersburg after an audience of the king. I entreated permission to accompany him; for I dread being alone in Paris. A great political crisis is said to be approaching. But all I obtained was a cold denial. I should be an obstruction, he said, to the speed of his journey. I should be a stumbling block in his way. He expects to arrive at Tzarsko-çelo after the departure of the emperor for the Georgian frontier, and may have to follow him.

"Remain quietly in Paris," was all the answer I elicited. "There was a time, and at no great distance, when it was the only spot of earth in which you imagined human happiness attainable. Resign yourself

to the fate you courted."

It was in vain I ventured to remonstrate.

"You have no longer connections in St. Petersburg to afford you a home during my leave of absence," he persisted. "My sister is in Moscow, where our family abode is of a nature to provoke only your disgust; even if Prascovia, whose feelings (with or without a cause) are embittered against you, would receive you under her roof. My visit to Tzarsko-çelo will be a stormy one. Judge what improvement it would derive by recalling to the recollection of the emperor the disappointment of his expectations in yourself!"

I am here, therefore, my dear father, alone. This appears but a trifling grievance; for you know me to be the inhabitant of a splendid mansion—surrounded by a noble establishment—secured by all the honours that surround an ambassador's wife. Yet am I most lonely and most unhappy; and, like the penitent of the Scriptures, would fain arise and go to my father for shelter in the home of my youth.

Your last letters contained so many severe allusions to my conduct, and the baroness has so repeatedly expressed your conviction that it has exercised an unfavourable influence over your diplomatic fortunes, that I feel a degree of hesitation I never expected to experience in

asking permission to visit you at Schloss Rehfeld.

Do not imagine that I am coming in pomp and pride to create trouble in your establishment; or that I am the thoughtless Ida of old. Aware of the sacrifices you have made on my account, and that your former hospitalities are curtailed to replace your estate in the prosperity you enjoyed previous to your ill-fated departure for Russia, I am pre-

pared for domestic quiet—for parsimony—for homeliness. Be assured, that should you accept my offer of becoming your inmate during the absence of the prince, no vexatious murmurs will increase your

domestic troubles.

Grievously do I sometimes blame myself for the seeming ingratitude of my readiness to naturalize myself in a foreign country; dreading lest the resentments of the pastor and poor Sara should have communicated themselves to yourself. Yet judge me leniently! I was the child of one who bequeathed me no tender relationships to watch over my infancy. By your desire my mother's family was excluded from Rehfeld. Your own avocations kept you equally aloof, and what but kindred blood holds sufficient influence over a child to determine its first tendencies?

But I am wrong to recur to the past. The contemplation is un-satisfactory to both. Enough that the turmoil and severity of the world have taught me to appreciate the joy of a peaceful independence. I shall anxiously expect your answer. The ten days that must elapse

ere I receive it will appear endless!

Letter LXIV.—From Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau, in Paris, to the Countess Auguste de Vaudreuil, in Burgundy.

July 25th, 1830.

In the absence, madam, of any privileged relation of Princess Gallitzin, and deeply impressed by the critical nature of the situation in which she is placed, I write, without her knowledge or privity, to implore the assistance of the mother of her father's wife.

The communication between the Russian embassy and the Hôtel de Vaudreuil has been so disastrously interrupted by the untoward incident of Count Erloff's wound, that I think it likely you may be unaware of Prince Gallitzin's sudden departure for St. Petersburg on business connected with the present political crisis, of too pressing a nature to admit of his being accompanied by his family. The princess is consequently alone in Paris; where the discontents of the people are gaining such alarming head, that the few families of condition accidentally detained here for the summer are flying in all directions.

Soured by the unjust aspersions of which she has been the victim. Princess Gallitzin has long withdrawn her confidence from the herd of flatterers by whose adulation, on her first arrival here, so young a head was naturally influenced. In the more critical epochs of life, it is only to those on whose sympathy we have natural claims we rely for counsel; and the consequence of the evil-dealing of the world towards my poor Ida has been to impart rare value in her eyes to the fidelity of an humble well-wisher like myself. There has been much to wither the germ of her young affections. In the three holiest affections of her sex-filial, conjugal, maternal-she has been cruelly disappointed; by finding herself a secondary object to an ambitious father and ambitious husband. She has consequently some pretext for the dispirited state of her feelings. At this moment, though fully aware, more aware

perhaps than others, of the dangers impending over Paris, I find it impossible to arouse her to a sense of her personal danger. All I can extort from her, in reply to my entreaties that she will take refuge with her friends from the tumults anticipated in this distracted capital, is a despairing ejaculation that she has only enemies in France!

is a despairing ejaculation that she has only enemies in France!

I suspect her to be devoid of means for so long a journey as Schloss Rehfeld; or, from her anxiety for letters in Germany, I should conceive it her intention to fly to her father. Ida is, however, too proud for such explanations. Meanwhile, the murmur in the distance grows louder and louder. The unpopularity of the ministry and of the royal family hourly increases, and from the government to the representatives of foreign governments, its obnoxious allies, there is but a step. We, Madame la Comtesse, who are of an age to remember the horrors of the first revolution, have some pretence for dreading the prospect of a second! Alas! madam, I confess to you that I tremble!

Twice or thrice in the course of yesterday did the Marquis de Rouilly present himself at the hotel, entreating access to her excellency. In obedience to the prohibition issued by the prince on occasion of Count Erloff's duel, he was refused. He wrote; his letters were returned. At length, at an advanced hour of the evening, he addressed a letter to

myself, imploring an interview.

To refer the question to the princess, would have been to insure a negative; and conceiving, from the more than suspected connection of the Marquis de Rouilly with the liberal party that his importunity might refer to some exigency connected with the events of the day. I

received him in my own apartment.

I was not deceived. The marquis bade me, if I valued the safety of her excellency, remove her, even if by force, from Paris. The obstinacy of the king, it seems, is likely to hurry on the course of events which time was gradually accomplishing; and so extensive is the irritation of popular feeling that the marquis assures me no protection may be sufficient for persons unfortunate enough to be connected with the court.

Scarcely a year ago, Princess Gallitzin was classed among the favourites of St. Cloud. The populace is slow to be informed of the variations of royal favour; and her excellency, though lying under royal reprobation, is likely, from her connection with the Vaudreuils, to be reckoned among the partizans of the absolute party,—the line recently adopted by Count Jules in the Chamber, rendering him an especial object of

popular hatred.

"No matter what becomes of me!" is the hourly ejaculation of her excellency. "No one cares for me,—no one has ever cared! Let it suffice for my comfort that my timely warning has preserved poor Marguerite from a journey hither." May I hope, madam, that you have anticipated the object of my letter, in an entreaty that you will prove equally providential towards the daughter of the Baron von Rehfeld? Were you to write and offer her shelter, she would probably accept with thankfulness; and I earnestly implore you, without betraying to her excellency my presumptuous application, to lose no time in affording her your advice.

Accept meanwhile, madam, the assurance of my respectful devotion.

## Letter LXV.—From Count Erloff, at Dover, to Count Alfred de Vaudreuil, in Paris.

PREPARE a gite for me, my dear Alfred, for as soon almost as this letter I shall reach Paris! To remain in London after the warnings despatched by yourself and the princess, was impossible. It was as nuch as I could do to tear myself from Ida, when I saw her rich and prosperous; but to absent myself, when I know her to be so exposed to

danger and affliction, is an effort beyond my powers.

My brother-in-law, rather in mistrust than kindness, confided to me a letter written by Ida, respecting the danger of removing Marquerite to France, at this actual moment. But her rash intimacy with the factious intrigant to whom I attempted to give a lesson on her account, renders it probable that she is only too correctly informed; and on pretence of ascertaining the exact state of the case, and forwarding authentic intelligence to Elvinston (who is wild to remove my poor dear suffering sister by slow journeys into Italy), I quitted London within a fortnight of my arrival, and shall at least be on the spot to watch over the safety of her who, whether loved or hated to distraction, is still the predominant influence of my life.

I leave poor Marguerite, though in a state of great debility, in no immediate danger, and surrounded by all the luxuries that wealth, all the zeal that the most affectionate tenderness, can afford. Never was she cared for among her own people and in her father's house as by the cordial and devoted family of her husband! Elvinston is, as you always assured me, the best fellow in the world! I have no anxiety for the destinies of his wife, but such as depends upon the will of Heaven!

For my poor Ida, on the contrary, I have a thousand;—yes, poor Ida, my dear Alfred, however high and imposing her worldly position. War without—war within! Nothing in her heart or household to afford comfort in the hour of tribulation! I apprehend a thousand evils for her, independent of those arising from public excitement. I am afraid of Rouilly—I am afraid even of you. Not one of you is interested in her behalf beyond the promptings of vanity that place you at the feet of any or every beauty in fashion. It is only I who would fain devote myself to her as a brother, and resign my worthless life in her cause!

Do not blame my re-appearance on the scene from which you had banished me. To refrain would have been an exercise of self-control scarcely to be expected of the "wilful barbarian" whose reckless nature

you have so truly described.

Letter LXVI.—From Count Alfred de Vaudreuil, in Paris, to Count Jules at St. Cloud.

26th July, 1830.

I LOSE not a moment in telling you that, after a long interview this morning with la belle Ida, in which I managed to extract from her six times as much as she is aware of having betrayed, I am convinced that

the projects of the freedom-of-the-press-mongers are far deeper laid than we ever for a moment conjectured. Do your very utmost to have this signified to madame. She has less sense than the others, but more accessible. See Madame de R., see whomever you can, that has the smallest influence with Polignac; and assure them meo periculo that there was a meeting of deputies last night at Rouilly's which

lasted till daylight this morning.

This message is not the sole motive of my letter. Send me back, by the bearer, an urgent invitation to Princess Gallitzin to hasten to Les Genets. Mine does not suffice to satisfy her scruples—or is perhaps the cause of her scruples. I had already suggested, through the gouvernante, a letter of similar import from our worthy aunt. But two days must elapse before the answer returns; and the rapid complication of events alarms me. All those one cares for must be hurried out of Paris. Impossible to surmise what the events of the next four-and-

twenty hours may bring to pass!

Princess Gallitzin is as wayward in all this as I have ever found her. No persuading her to listen to reason; or rather no persuading her of the existence of any reason superior to her own! She affects a sort of romantic gratification in exposure to the dangers to which she has been left by her glacial ambassador; nor can I induce her, by any representation of mine or old Moreau's, to quit her post! She is waiting, she says, for answers from Germany to letters of importance. She may wait, perhaps, till the Russian embassy has been razed to the ground by an outburst of popular fury! For Rouilly, who is, I am persuaded, the efficient head of the movement party, has had the art to render Gallitzin so odious, and to attribute so much of our cabinet policy to the ascendancy of Russia, that I have very little doubt the precipitate journey of the prince was produced by some warning that he is a marked man, from the secret police which Russia holds fast bound in its golden chain.

Thave had the precaution to secure a passport available for Madame Gallitzin, her attendants, and myself as their escort; and to keep horses in readiness for the first stage out of Paris, at any hour of the day or night. Unless our prospects brighten in the course of to-day, I shall by some means or other prevail upon her to start this evening; either taking the road to Les Genets, in accordance with your invitation, or to Germany at once. A line in return, to let me know what has transpired at the château since the council held this morning! The altroupements increase tremendously in the Basse Ville, and troops are

marching in from all directions !-Adieu !

### Letter LXVII.-From Princess Gallitzin to Baron von Rehfeld.

ONLY five days have elapsed since the date of my last letter, my dear father, and the progress of events has been so rapid, that instead of venturing to wait your answer, I have determined to quit Paris this very night. The Count de Tcherbatoff, who during Prince Gallitzin's absence exercises unlimited authority here, and exercises it in a manner to show he is the confidant of the disagreements between myself and

the prince, persists in assuring me that, whatever may be the result of the king's constitutional maintenance of authority over a factious press, it is too much the interest of the liberal party, or any engaged in the dispute, to conciliate the favour of Russia, to admit of the possibility of my exposure to molestation. But Monsieur de Rouilly, the friend of Laffitte and Bérard, as well as the Vaudreuils, the adherents of the court, are unanimous in opinion that flight is the best security; and I am consequently hastening to the protection of the mother of Madame von Rehfeld, as the most suitable retreat for me, during the absence of the prince.

Do not suppose, dear sir, that it is the non-arrival of an answer to my self-invitation that prevents my preference of a journey to Rehfeld. But without having recourse to Monsieur Tcherbatoff, who might see fit to oppose the measure. I cannot command either money or passports

for crossing the frontier.

Have the goodness, therefore, to write to me at Les Genets. I cannot but fully believe that both yourself and the baroness will be anxious to hear of my welfare at so trying a moment. We set off this evening at dusk, on pretence of a drive to Viry, the villa of Madame de Raguse; and from thence, hasten into Burgundy.

## Letter LXVIII.—From Count Erloff to the Baroness von Rehfeld.

I PROMISED Lord Elvinston to warn you, mother, against addressing your letters to my sister in Paris, as he suggested in his last; their journey being delayed by the alarming aspect of public events. My sister's perils of climate are far less peremptory than those which might

arise from personal alarm.

I write from Amiens; where I am compelled to pass the night by the impossibility of procuring post-horses, or a place in any public conveyance. So many persons are in transit on the road to England, that I must submit to this vexatious delay. The period of Lord and Lady Elvinston's journey will be determined by my report of the state of affairs in Paris.

### Hôtel de Vaudreuil, 27th July, 1830.

I wrote the above without reflecting that, though committed to the post at Amiens, it would not precede me here. I add this postscript, in considerable doubt whether the foreign mails will be able to quit the capital. As I approached it yesterday en poste, every league of the journey rendered more and more apparent the excitement of public feeling. I had even the greatest difficulty in obtaining horses from Vernon to St. Denis. The route presented an almost uninterrupted line of carriages; but at the last post I found it impossible to proceed. A crowd of vehicles obstructed the road, in want of horses, the postmasters' stables having been seized for the public service. Further delay, at so exciting a moment, was insupportable. Abandoning my baggage, therefore, I made my way on foot, across the fields, into Paris.

I will not detain you, mother, to describe the state of emotion in which, after passing the barrier, I pushed my way through the mélée encumbering the Faubourg St. Denis! Insufficiently versed in the

topography of Paris to reach the Faubourg St. Germain without encountering the struggle of the Boulevarts, I found myself unarmed and as a mere spectator in the midst of charges of cavalry and the uproar of an insurgent populace; thrice obstructed in my road by the interposition of barricades, formed of broken carriages, carts, pavingstones, and every object available for the improvisation of civil war.

At any other moment I should have found it difficult, nay, impossible, to resist involving myself in the quarrel so little my own; nor will I outrage your Vaudreuil blood by avowing on which side my sympathies were enlisted. I pushed my way, however, like a madman through that boiling, seething mass of human fervour, struggling for liberties in which I or mine have no interest beyond the common fraternization of human nature; intent only upon hastening to the support of the only individual in Paris personally interesting to my

feelings.

Nearly three hours had elapsed before, covered with dust and smoke, I presented myself at the gates of the embassy. I had great difficulty in getting even my solitary summons answered. In every street, as I passed, even those remote from the uproar of the émeutes, I had observed the portes cochères carefully closed. It did not therefore much surprise me that Nikita, the old porter, should reply abruptly and ungraciously to a pedestrian applicant, in such complete disarray as I presented myself.

After making myself known, I inquired for Prince Gallitzin.—"Gone

to St. Petersburg."

I inquired for the princess. "She was not visible."

Understanding by this a porter's banal excuse, I persisted. "Her excellency," he said, "had driven out, early in the evening, with Count Alfred de Vaudreuil. It was now near midnight. There appeared little probability that she would return."

I inquired for Mademoiselle Thérèse?-"Absent also." For Tcherbatoff?—" Monsieur le Comte had retired for the night; and was very

unlikely to admit a stranger, at that hour."

The porter now closed the gate in my face, and after a moment's reflection I began to feel the absurdity of persisting. Still, I lingered near the spot. At intervals, pelotons of troops galloped through the street, at intervals a vidette; and at a distance, I could hear every now and then a discharge of random shots, as if the insurrection was every moment gathering ground. At length I determined on a second attempt; and by a considerable bribe prevailed upon Nikita to carry my name to Tcherbatoff.

The man admitted me within the gates the moment he undertook my commission; and as I stood under the archway, inhaling the perfume of intermingling lime and orange blossoms, freshened by the dews of midnight, with my eyes fixed upon the self-same windows of Ida's apartments, the contemplation of which, scarcely a month ago, filled my heart with emotions of so different a nature, my feelings were

strangely overcome.

The porter returned with an ungracious message; still holding in his hand the scrap of paper on which I had written my name. "The count

did not choose to see me."

But though I had submitted to the wilfulness of a porter obeying the orders he had received, I was not to be thus lightly treated by Tcherbatoff. Without a syllable of altercation, therefore, I made my way straight into the house. The servants had not courage to oppose me. In a moment I had entered the Chancery, where the whole mission, as well as several strangers, were assembled in earnest deliberation.

Tcherbatoff, much confused at my appearance, instantly led me into

an adjoining room.

"I am sorry to appear an intruder upon your midnight councils," said I. "My errand here is of a purely personal nature. In the midst of the riot and confusion that salute me on my return to Paris, I wish to obtain tidings of the welfare of Prince and Princess Gallitzin."

"Nikita surely informed you that the prince is at St. Petersburg?

Of the princess, I almost hoped you were come to give me tidings."

"I tell you I am this moment arrived in Paris—my dress might serve to convince you. I have traversed the city on foot, contending both with the troops and the populace."
"You have not seen Vaudreuil, then?"

"I concluded he was at Baden, whither he announced his journey to

me a week ago."

"He may be on his way there: in which case her excellency is the

companion of his flight."

There was something insulting in the tone of Tcherbatoff that

strongly tempted me to knock him down.

"Have you any further commands with me?" said he abruptly. "If not, excuse my quitting you. We are deliberating upon the surest mode of despatching our courier. The populace is in possession of the barriers."

"You will first have the goodness to inform me," said I, sternly, what grounds you have for stating the princess to be in Vaudreuil's

company, and when her excellency quitted home?"

"I am ready to answer you without the assumption of this Paladin tone," replied Tcherbatoff, coldly, "having scarcely leisure to waste, in the midst of an *émeute*, on any private quarrel, even in honour of Princess Gallitzin. I, myself, saw her excellency enter a strange carriage, brought hither by Vaudreuil this evening, at her usual dinner hour, taking with her several caskets of valuables and her personal attendants. Previous to quitting the house, she issued orders in contradiction to these appearances, as if purporting only an evening drive; but she has not returned! Princess Gallitzin having accustomed us to caprices, I contented myself with desiring Nikita to sit up and admit her at any hour of the night, however irregular, at which she might choose to present herself."

"Terrified by the popular disturbances," said I, "she has doubtless

sought refuge at the Hôtel de Vaudreuil!"

Tcherbatoff shrugged his shoulders. "It strikes me that the princess was quite as safely and far more respectably lodged under the roof of the Russian embers," said the attack with a room.

the Russian embassy," said the attaché with a sneer.

"On the contrary, in such instances, obscurity affords the best secu-

rity"

"At all events, she has judged for herself, and for her own sake, let us trust, discreetly," added the count. "But I must now positively wish you good night. Should you hear tidings of the princess, oblige me by communicating them. We might hear of her, perhaps, at the Hotel de Rouilly," added he with a smile. "But it would be less than desirable for a servant of the Russian ambassador to be seen in communication with such a den of rebels."

Retaining to myself the right of bringing Tcherbatoff to account, hereafter, for the insolence of his tone, I took a hasty leave, and with

hurried steps, and the utmost difficulty, made my way hither. With still more difficulty did I manage to rouse old Bertlet from his slumbers. I verily believe that the tumults of the revolution, distracting the city, had not yet reached that secluded quarter!

I had no time to take upon myself the task of enlightening him. All

I had to inquire was after the family.

"The countess was in Burgundy; Count Jules was on duty at St. Cloud; Count Alfred, probably, at his entresol on the Place de la Concorde."

I hurried thither.

"Monsieur le Comte had been absent since morning." His valet-de-

chambre appeared almost as anxious as myself.

I now resolved at all hazards to obtain information at the Hôtel de Rouilly. But so exhausted was I by fatigue and hunger after my harassing march, that it was an effort almost beyond my power to attain the Faubourg du Roule, and not a facre was to be had!

On reaching the porte cochère, my knock produced no response. On repeating it a second and even a third time, the door was slightly opened, and a hand protruded, as if expecting a card or some sort of countersign. I had none to give; but managed, through the crack of the door, to make my inquiries. All I could understand of the answer was, that the family had retired for the night, and that it was many weeks since Madame l'Ambassadrice had visited the hotel.

Yet, in outrageous defiance of this assertion, I saw through the aperture lights in the grand apartments, and half-a-dozen carriages and cabriolets stationed in the courtyard. Whether the princess was there or not, I am now convinced that one of Rouilly's political conclaves

was sitting at that moment!

While I stood hesitating what further course to pursue, a detachment of cavalry, galloping in from the barracks at Courbevoie, probably on its road towards the Basse Ville, scoured the street. Long ere they reached the porte cochère, it was closed, and the bolts heavily drawn within. All that remained for me was to return, footsore and heartsore, to the Hôtel de Vaudreuil, where I had prepared Bertlet to expect me back.

Refreshed by a few hours' sleep, I now hasten to reassure you with intelligence that, though a revolution is incontestably in progress, Princess Gallitzin has quitted Paris. I have just ascertained from Alfred's servants that the carriage in which she left the embassy was his, and that they were to proceed to Viry, on a visit to the Duchesse de R—. There, at least, they are safe! May this letter also reach

you in safety.

Letter LXIX.—From Mademoiselle Thérèse Moreau, in Paris, to Prince Gallitzin, in St. Petersburg.

It becomes my painful duty to apprise your excellency of the unhappy course of events that has arisen in your family out of the cruel visitations with which it has pleased Heaven to afflict this capital. My letter may never reach your hands. The fate of Paris, of France itself, is still uncertain. I must not, however, refrain from doing that justice to the conduct, it may be to the memory, of your unfortunate wife, which the

deportment of Monsieur de Tcherbatoff towards myself when I presented myself at the embassy this morning, induces me to fear may

not otherwise be transmitted to your knowledge.

It is scarcely necessary to preface my statement with the assertion that, left alone in this great city, so young, so beautiful, yet so little cared for, Princess Gallitizin surveyed the commencement of the recent terrible struggle with utter consternation. You will learn from your own household, how, fearfully alarmed by warning and admonishment from all parties, she consented to take refuge till your return with the mother of the Baroness von Rehfeld. The proposal was my own; and, at my suggestion, Count Alfred de Vaudreuil, on the first open demonstration of violence in the city, removed us from the Hôtel de l'Ambassade, which we were assured would be one of the first points attacked by the populace. Her excellency raised considerable difficulties against the plan; but was at length prevailed upon (escorted by myself, Luiska, and the Count) to quit Paris.

But alas! her long hesitation, her misgivings, and the feebleness occasioned by a slow fever, which for the last six weeks has been undermining her constitution, caused the utter failure of the enterprise. I scarcely know what I write. I want courage to describe intelligibly the terrible scenes from which I have just emerged. The insurgent city is scarcely yet tranquillized, or the blood dried up in the streets. Hundreds of dead lie unburied—thousands of wounded encumber the hospitals. And I have witnessed all this! Your excellency must

pardon me if I seem to ramble.

On quitting the hotel with Monsieur de Vaudreuil, Ida, though pale and silent, seemed supported by the resolution of despair. And it is well that she was so; for notwithstanding the precautions taken beforehand by the count to ascertain the securest line for reaching the southern barrier, as we were following the quay towards the Pont Neuf, we became entangled in a line of vehicles from which we could only extricate ourselves by turning into the Rue de Seine; where we were met by a detachment of the insurgents, who instantly surrounded the carriage and took possession of it for the purpose of forming a barricade. Already they had seized the horses' heads and forced the coachman to dismount; and the remonstrances and resistance of the count served only to stimulate the people into greater.

Princess Gallitzin was the first to recognize the inutility of resistance, and to urge us to return to the hotel; and thus, in the thick of a stress and uproar such as I had not supposed human beings capable of creating, we were compelled to abandon our project—abandon all—and return as best we might, to the hotel. But in that dreadful struggle (how dreadful, I even now tremble to consider!) we were separated! The last I beheld of the princess was after descending from the carriage, pale as death and trembling in every limb, leaning on the arm of the Count de Vaudreuil who was attempting to force a passage for her through the métée.

But already, a knot of those frantic men, intoxicated to all appearance by the excitement of their enterprise, had seized upon myself and Luiska; and insisted upon forcing us to a neighbouring mercer's, that we might lend our aid to a female already at work there, making up tri-coloured cockades. Resistance was impossible; and any place of shelter seemed preferable to the press of that trampling multitude! Since it was impossible to rejoin the princess, whom I considered as safe as circumstances would admit under the guidance of an efficient protector, we patiently obeyed the commands of our harsh task-masters; and for seven successive hours worked without intermission, on the promise that we should afterwards be escorted back in safety to our homes.

They kept their word. But it was an early hour of the morning when I reached the embassy. Troops were already scouring the streets in all directions; for the morning of the fatal 28th had already dawned!

Your excellency will enter into my feelings on learning from Nikita that the princess had not yet returned. I despatched a message to the Hôtel de Vaudreuil—to the residence of Count Alfred; still no tidings! Impossible to hope that she had quitted Paris! Money could not have procured, at that moment, a vehicle for that purpose.

At the Hôtel de Vaudreuil, however, my messages of inquiry procured me the aid of Count Erloff, who appears to have arrived most opportunely on the very eve of the revolution. He lost not a moment in seeking me, and having ascertained the exact spot where I had parted

from the princess, instantly set off to make personal inquiries.

Overpowered with misery and fatigue, I was indeed ill-prepared for the insulting tone in which my explanations were received by Monsieur de Tcherbatoff and others of your excellency's establishment. So bitter, indeed, was my mortification under their insinuations against my unhappy Ida, that on the return of Count Erloff towards evening, not only without bringing intelligence of the missing parties but bringing such tidings of the state of the capital as convinced us that the cause of the king was lost, I readily accepted his invitation to accompany him to the Hötel de Vaudreuil, in order that we might pursue our future inquiries together. The distresses, the despair, of this high-spirited young man, while describing the frightful scenes he had witnessed and surmising what might be the destiny of the unfortunate creature we were deploring was that of the truest and tenderest of brothers!

But alas! the support of his presence was soon denied me. At an early hour, the count quitted the hotel to prosecute his inquiries; and

from that moment has been heard of no more!

Unless mischance had befallen him—unless mischance had befallen the princess, some tidings of them must surely have reached the embassy; and Bertlet, who has this moment returned from thence bringing tidings of the complete success of the revolutionary party and the cessation of the struggle, assures me that not a syllable is known, either there or at the residence of her excellency, or the two cousins!

I have felt it my duty to acquaint you of this. My letter may never reach you. It is still impossible to surmise what may be the result of

these ruinous and cruel events.

Letter LXX.—From Count Jules de Vaudreuil, at Rambouillet, to the Countess de Vaudreuil, at Les Genets.

On the point of following the royal family to Havre, I have scarcely strength, dear madam, for the melancholy office that devolves upon me of acquainting you with the direful effects of the recent crisis upon our

unfortunate family. If I have not in consequence abandoned that of my sovereign in their day of humiliation, I breathe not the less earnestly my prayer to Heaven of "God forgive the king!" The ministers of him whom I am no longer entitled to denominate Charles X., have to answer for deluging the capital with blood, and decimating the families so faithfully devoted to the cause of monarchy

in France!

I have lost my brother, Madam! Alfred, our dear and deplored Alfred, has fallen in a struggle with a band of ruffians, whom I will not gratify with the name of countrymen! His body was recognized by the papers he carried about him, among the officers of the royal guard slain in the attack upon the Louvre. That he should have volunteered his services where the danger was greatest, at a period when so many of those calling themselves adherents of the throne—so many of those indebted for their bread to the house of Bourbon—either skulked in their houses or fled from this devoted city, will not surprise you, who know the gallant spirit of my brother. At present I have not courage to say more.

You have probably learned from other sources, that on the first day of the revolution, Princess Gallitzin disappeared from her hôtel, and has been heard of no more. So rapid has been the course of events, so confused the proceedings of the self-constituted authorities, and so hasty the interment of the dead in consequence of the state of the atmosphere, that it is more than probable she may have fallen an unsuspected

victim, and been already laid in an obscure grave.

Pray for us, my dear aunt, for consolation for evils past, and deliverance from evils to come! Alas! I have myself scarcely fortitude to look forward to the distracted prospects of France!

### CONCLUSION.

REVOLUTIONS, like other storms, have their term, and eventually rave themselves to rest. Within two years of the "glorious days of July," nearly all trace was effaced in Paris of that sanguinary crisis. The graves of the dead were obliterated, a new dynasty was reigning at the Tuileries, and a new ministry becoming unpopular, under the government of the once liberal Marquis de Rouilly. A new ambassador of all the Russias presided over the malachite vases; and of his prodecessor nothing was known in Paris, save that he had not been recalled to the imperial court on his removal from office. Lost in obscurity at Moscow, he was either passing his widowhood in decent mourning, or fretting away his disgrace in sullen mortification.

In the spring of 1832, at the period the cholera was raging in Paris, the volatile aristocracy of that brilliant capital, which had already reconcentrated itself into courtly form, under the judicious influence of the new dynasty, began suddenly to evince that fervour of contrition and piety to which, at such epochs of pain and peril, even the least devout persons are susceptible. The churches and confessionals were constantly filled with persons emitting from their dress the aromatic effusions, announcing anxious precautions against infection; and the

sacred rites, which could no longer be bestowed upon the dead, were doubly in request among the living. The temples of religion were perpetually filled with incense—the alters constantly adorned with flowers; and while hearses passed rapidly and almost continuously through the streets towards the burial-grounds of the suburbs, the pealing notes of the organ filled the groined aisles of Notre Dame and St. Eustache with unceasing hymns of intercession. At that awful moment, even the most inconsiderate seemed to re-attach themselves to their duties.

One evening, towards the close of the month of May, when the epidemic was at its worst, the equipage of the old Countess de Vaudreuil drew up before the gate of the convent in the rue des Fossés St. Victor, to which, in former days, it had so often conveyed her gentle grand-daughter, and lo! there stepped forth into the parloir, not the

venerable dowager, but the now widowed Baroness von Rehfeld, once more an inmate of the Hôtel de Vaudreuil.

"I am come, révérende mère," said she, addressing the lady abbess, after respectfully kissing her hand (an homage dedicated rather to a daughter of the noble house of Montmorency than to the superior of the sisterhood), "to execute a commission too long neglected. One whom I must not name in your presence—a renegade from our holy church—has forwarded to me for the last two years her contributions to the funds of the convent for the furtherance of its charitable purposes. Hitherto," she continued, dropping two rouleaux of a hundred louis each into the trone des pauvres, "I have been afraid of presenting myself here—apprehensive you might suppose my maternal influence was insufficiently exercised to oppose the recantation of my unhappy child. In a land of heretics, révérende mère, and under the influence of her husband's family, during a painful and long hopeless indisposition, the work of conversion was achieved ere I entertained a suspicion on the subject. In the remote province from which, on the death of the Baron von Rehfeld (a victim to mortification arising from the ingratitude of his prince), I hastened to seek refuge in my beloved France, I was so shut out from tidings of the civilized world, that the welfare of my children was as the showing of a dream; and Lady Elvinston had become lost to the Catholic church, and my son had been many weeks in the grave ere I was aware of the danger of the one or death of the other. I do not ask you, révérende mère, for your prayers for Marguerite. Bestow them upon her mother, now, as it were, childless; and let the reverential gratitude entertained for your good sisterhood, by one whose conduct in her new country is cited as a model of excellence, plead in extenuation of her change of faith."

A few kindly words expressive of thankfulness towards the noble exile, tempered by heartfelt regret for the lamb that had strayed from

her flock, broke from the venerable lips of the superior.

"I loved her well!" said the révérende mère, "but since her conduct in her new station is as exemplary as in her old, the blessing of heaven be upon her, and prosper her with its everlasting grace! It is something to be remembered thus affectionately by a child of our house, after years of absence, sickness, danger, and the still more absorbing vanities of the brilliant world of which she forms a part."

Again did the countess acknowledge the clemency of the superior; and again, and more earnestly than before, recommended herself and

the Hôtel de Vaudrenil to the prayers of the community.

"It were less than grateful were we to deny the request," replied the Révérende, on seeing that, in the earnestness of her panic, tears were actually falling from the eyes of her who, on the annihilation of her house and misfortunes of her native land, had remained tearless—"seeing that to your family our poor community is indebted for the most remarkable penitent, and most devout inmate, who ever called down upon its walls the blessings of Heaven!"

The hand of Madame von Rehfeld was on the handle of the door of the parloir to depart; but her movements were now suspended by

curiosity.

"At the fatal moment when sister Ursule sought refuge in this establishment," said the abbess, raising her eyes to heaven at the recollection of those days of terror, miscalled glorious, "the cross and the altar appeared on the eve of overthrow—the throne was already sacrificed—the word cloture was an empty name! All we expected was the dissolution of our holy order, and the dispersion of the sisterhood; and in affording a shelter to a broken-hearted and homeless woman, whom I knew only as akin to our beloved Marguerite, my object was a mere work of charity. Princess Gallitzin was a Protestant; how could I hope she would live to become a convert to our faith,—a submissive daughter to our house!"

Madame von Rehfeld, who had been listening with breathless attention to the address of the abbess, was now thoroughly overcome!—Ida alive?—The lost Princess Gallitzin an inmate of that house? Her tears had been already dried;—her very exclamations were now

suspended!

"During her noviciate, prolonged beyond the usual period to give ample limit for her confirmation in her new opinions," resumed the abbess, "it was the desire of our good sister Ursule that the strictest secrecy should be observed concerning her place of retreat. Extreme in all things, she is now as enthusiastic in devotion as before in worldliness. Some days have elapsed since her profession. But she is now irrevocably pledged; and no interference, no remonstrance can henceforward disturb the tranquillity of her mind."

"This is the most unheard-of, the most extraordinary event!" faltered Madame von Rehfeld, alternately terrified, indignant, and incredulous. "She, whom I had mourned as dead!—she, the tidings of whose disappearance hastened the end of her father!—she, who is believed by the whole court of St. Petersburg to have fallen a victim to the horrors of the revolution of July—to be alive—safe—a penitent

-a nun!"

"Pardon me," interrupted the superior, "not the whole court of St. Petersburg. The husband of our poor recluse has been from first to last, apprised of the truth, and acquiescent in the disposal of he destinies. But for this sanction, our proceedings had been illegal."

destinies. But for this sanction, our proceedings had been illegal."
"C'est inoui—je m'y perds!" was again and again the cry of the astonished baroness. "So coolly as he received from Wilhelm von Rehfeld the inheritance of poor Ida, as her survivor, not as her husband!—If he had only afforded me the least clue—the slightest

suspicion!"

"It was the express desire of Sœur Ursule that no worldly intrusion should mar the serenity of her noviciate," interrupted the abbess. "The prince is so far exonerated.—By what harsh usage or tacit condemnation he and his revengeful sister may have rendered the proceedings of his unfortunate wife an act of desperation rather than an effort of conviction, far be it for me to determine!—But this I can, on my own authority, testify: that the attendance of Sœur Ursule on

the dying bed of Count Erloff was the result of accident—one of the thousand episodes arising out of the fatal tumults of the revolution!"

"Princess Gallitzin an attendant on the death-bed of my son!" faltered the astonished baroness. "When, where, are these startling

discoveries to end!"

"The night on which the princess, way-worn and famished, fled to these walls for refuge," returned the superior, "was one devoted by our sisterhood to the care of the wounded and dying, who, when the beds and wards of the Hôtel Dieu were full to overflowing, were brought to our dormitories for relief,—I have said before that at that crisis clôture was but a name; too happy we, that, amid the general wreck of society, we could purchase our impunity by devoting our-selves to the succour of the unfortunate! Within an hour of entering our house, the terrified fugitive had implored permission to replace, with the habit of noviciate, the worldly garments in which, tattered and disfigured by outrage, she sank half senseless at our gate. In that dress did the once haughty ambassador's wife, as the first fruits of her humility, administer to the wants of the wounded of all conditions, entrusted to our care!"

"And among them, then," exclaimed the baroness, wringing her hands with frantic emotion, "among them was my unhappy son?"

"He was not among them long!" replied the abbess, crossing her hands devoutly upon her bosom. "He was the very first we surrendered to the buryers of the dead!"

"My son was flung, then, into one of the pits prepared for the grace-less bodies of the insurgents of July?" faltered the baroness. "The brother of Marguerite Erloff was laid in the quiet cemetery of

our holy house," replied the abbess with some dignity. "And can I not be admitted to an interview with my step-daughter?"

demanded Madame von Rehfeld.

"For Sœur Ursule, the relationships of this world are at an end!" replied the reverend mother. "I will, however, acquaint her with your desire."

The ten minutes devoted to the errand appeared to the agitated baroness of immeasurable duration; the reply at length delivered to

her by the superior of cruel inflexibility.

Sour Ursule had taken her everlasting leave of this world. She entreated permission to avoid the disturbance of mind that must necessarily ensue from such a meeting.

"At least," cried the baroness, more angry than afflicted,—"at least, reverend mother, suffer me to visit the cemetery and contemplate the grave of my son."

As she traversed, for this purpose, the convent garden, of which the slender acacia trees were at that moment loaded with bloom, and under which sported the white-veiled pensionnaires and even their grave instructresses, the scene was precisely such as many of my readers may have seen depicted in the summer saloon of Elvinston Castle.

A year or two ago, as Madame von Rehfeld, during a visit to Scotland to the happiest of wives and mothers, was surveying the summer panel and admiring the accuracy of the delineation, she pointed out to the viscountess the wicket leading from the garden to the cometery, and disclosed the startling mysterics with which it was connected.

"Every year, my dear Marguerite," said she, "when I visit the convent as bearer of your annual benefactions, I repair to that sacred spot, and offer up my prayers on the grave of your brother. According to the custom of the order, the spot is marked only by a plain black cross. But I never yet visited it that I did not find fresh flowers on the turf, and more than once have observed the retreating figure of one of the sisterhood rising from her knees on my approach. I am convinced it was that of Sœur Ursule! That grave constitutes her sole connexion with the past! That grave is her only worldly consolation! But who, under her coarse black robe and mournful veil, who would ever dream of recognizing the ambitious Lily of Rehfeld—the haughty Ambassadon's Wife?"

THE END.



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